

It Was Always You

It Was Always You - I

Eddie_KaspbrakTozier

[**It Was Always You by Eddie_KaspbrakTozier**](#)

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Summary:

Eddie, miraculously, survives the fight with Pennywise. Richie is still hopelessly in love with him, even after all of these years. As Richie stays with Eddie to help him with his recovery and divorce, he tries to find the courage to tell Eddie his true feelings.

Eddie wakes up after the fight with Pennywise to realize his whole life has been a lie – his asthma, his marriage, god, his whole adult life. Although now, Eddie is finally free to decide what he wants out of life. Eddie slowly comes to realize his feelings for his best friend.

Told in alternating point of views – Richie and Eddie's.

OR

IT Chapter Three. The ending we deserve.

1. Chapter One

Author's Note:

Tile inspired by Panic! at the Disco's "It Was Always You": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GoFylcrxdM0>

I'll be posting two chapters every weekend. I have the whole story written. I'm just cleaning up later chapters. Enjoy!

It Was Always You

Chapter One

Richie's POV

It all happened so fast.

Hovering in the emptiness of the Deadlights. Eddie leaning over him. Blood splattering on his face. Eddie getting thrown. Pressing his jacket against the gaping hole in Eddie's chest. Killing that motherfucking clown; crushing its tiny little heart in his hands.

The Losers had managed to carry Eddie out of that hell hole and out of the crumbling Neibolt Street house. They're now all squished in Ben's car rushing towards Derry General Hospital. Richie is in the backseat cradling Eddie's head in his lap, screaming and sobbing simultaneously.

"Don't you dare fucking die on me, man! You can't fucking die! Not now! Not after we killed that motherfucker!"

Richie bends down and touches his forehead against Eddie's. He starts to rock against Eddie, sobbing hiccups ripping through this body.

He whispers, "Please don't leave me. I just got you back, you idiot.

Please don't go." He gently kisses Eddie's cheek.

Eddie's eyes are semi-open but blank. Expressionless. Blood covers his front and has completely soaked through Richie's jacket.

They screech to a halt in front of Derry General, and before Richie even gets a chance to blink Eddie is pulled away by paramedics. Eddie's rolled directly into surgery and the Losers are slammed into chairs in the waiting room.

Richie feels like everything around him is crumbling. He covers his face with his hands allowing the sorrow and anguish to rack through his body.

It would take a miracle for Eddie to survive after losing so much blood. While Richie's never been the praying type, he sends his thoughts to whatever alien creature or being that is listening to spare Eddie's life.

He feels a hand land on his shoulder.

He jumps. "What the fuck!"

"Sorry, sorry! Richie, it's ok", Bev says. "I just thought you could use a cup of something warm." She's holding out a Styrofoam cup of coffee.

"Oh. Sorry, Bev." He takes the cup from Bev and drinks. It tastes like shit and burns going down his throat. He couldn't care less.

Bev crouches down next to Richie. "Hey, why don't you get cleaned up a little bit? Bill and Mike are going to go back to the Townhouse to wash up and change. You should go with them. Ben and I will stay until you come back in case there's any news."

Richie's shaking his head even before Bev is finished talking.

"Uh, uh. I...I can't." The tears start to roll down his cheeks. "What if...what if he-" His tears choke out the words before he can finish.

Bev rubs her hand on Richie's back and presses her forehead against Richie's. "It's ok. I'll tell you what, you and I can stay here while the

others go back. I'll have them grab a change of clothes for you. Cause, no offense Trashmouth, your kinda disgusting.”

Now that Bev mentions it, Richie is disgusting. He's covered in Eddie's blood, mud, and shit knows what else from Pennywise's lair. He sure as hell isn't leaving but a change of clothes would be nice.

Richie nods. “Ok.”

Bev pulls back and smiles at him. “Ok.”

Richie doesn't know how long it's been since Ben, Bill, and Mike have left. He's slumped in the chair, staring at the ceiling fan, and thinking about Eddie.

Richie remembers how as a kid he loved riling Eddie up. Teasing him about his fanny pack. Ragging on his mom. Pinching his cheeks. Cute, cute, cute!

He was fascinated with the way Eddie's face would scrunch in on itself when he was annoyed - creating a crease between his eyebrows, his lips falling in a flat line, his eyes taking on a new shade of brown. So fucking cute.

And, man, Richie absolutely loved it when Eddie would push back. Which he always did. He never let Richie get away with any of his shit. Always throwing back insults. Telling him to shut the fuck up. Pushing his way into the hammock.

Richie has two thoughts simultaneously. *I fucking loved that hammock! Man, FUCK that hammock!*

That hammock was both a blessing and a curse. Richie hogged the hammock as much as he could, and while he didn't think about it too deeply as a kid, he knows now he did it to get a rise out of Eddie. Eddie would yell at him about how his time was up while

simultaneously squeezing in next to Richie. He ate up getting that kind of attention from Eddie.

The hammock meant he didn't have to find an excuse to touch Eddie. It would push their bodies up against each other - tangling their limbs and allowing him to feel the rise and fall of Eddie's breathing. Richie would hide his burning face behind a comic book hoping no one would notice.

But also, FUCK that hammock. Eddie would be there one moment and then the next he would be leaving to go home. Richie remembers feeling the cold creeping in replacing Eddie's warmth.

He would go home at night and relive the whole experience over again, and think about what it would be like to properly cuddle with Eddie. Eddie's breath against his neck. Eddie's big brown eyes staring up at him. Leaning down to kiss Eddie.

And, well, fuck. That's why Richie also hated that stupid hammock. It taunted him with what he wanted most in the world and made him realize he could never have it.

And in the last 27 years, nothing has changed. He still loves riling Eddie up. Shit, he did it all through dinner the night before.

Arriving at the restaurant and seeing all the other Losers grown up was surreal. The images of them as kids and adults blurring together.

When he first saw Eddie as an adult it literally took his breath away. Eddie looked the same but also completely different. Same pinched face, brown hair slicked back, and big warm brown eyes. As a kid Eddie was cute, but as an adult, he was fucking hot. Fuck, he even had a five o'clock shadow.

Richie had sat down next to Eddie at the dinner table cause, duh, even as an adult he needs to be as close as possible to Eddie. When the topic of marriage came up, he realized that Eddie was wearing a gold ring. It made him feel like he was going to throw up.

Not only is Eddie married but he's married to a woman. A woman who is in every way an exact replica of Eddie's shitty, manipulative,

overprotective mother. God, Richie hated that woman. He hates both Mrs. K's.

It isn't fair. Eddie deserves so much better than his shitty mother and controlling wife. Eddie deserves the world.

Someone's shaking Richie's shoulder pulling him out of his thoughts.

"Richie, Richie." It's Ben. "Hey man, we brought you some clean clothes and food."

"Oh, thanks man." Richie grabs the clothes and stands up. His joints pop from sitting too long and his clothes are stiff against him from all of the dried blood and gunk. He shuffles to the nearest bathroom.

God, he looks like shit. He looks like he just crawled out of the sewer, which is actually pretty accurate.

He pulls off his dirty clothes and shoves them into the trash can. Now only in his boxers, he takes off his glasses and shoves his head under the faucet. The sink runs red and Richie has the urge to throw up but he hasn't eaten for hours. He dry heaves instead.

He pulls on the fresh clothes. A pair of jeans, one of his loud graphic button-ups, and a zip-up hoodie. He's still looks pretty shitty, but who the fuck cares. It felt good to be in clean clothes.

He comes out of the bathroom to find all of the Losers sitting, silently staring at him.

"Huh." Richie adjusts his glasses and shoves his hands into his pockets. "Thanks guys...you know...for the clothes."

Bill pats him on the back as he sits back down. They had brought all of their chairs into a small circle. It reminds Richie of the circle they created as kids when they promised to come back if Pennywise ever showed his ugly face again. He feels the empty space next to him where Eddie should be and the space where Stan should be.

Fuck, they have lost so much already with Stan. They can't afford... Richie can't afford lose Eddie too.

Richie starts to sob again. He hears the scrapping of chairs as the Losers pull in closer to him. They pull him into a group hug.

“I’m sorry. I’m sorry.” Richie sobs. “It’s just - I can’t - I don’t know what I’ll do if he -”

“Hey, hey. There’s nothing to be sorry about man.” Mike grabs his arm and squeezes.

“Eddie will make it through this, Richie. I mean, you know how fucking stubborn he is.”, Ben says. Richie breathes out a small laugh.

God, he loved these beautiful people around him. He forgot what it was like to have *real* friends. Friends that you could just be yourself around. Friends that wouldn’t judge you. Friends that you could tell your deepest, darkest secret to.

Richie feels his heart clench. Even though these are his best friends in the entire world he hasn’t been completely open with them.

“You guys...I...I need to tell you something. Something I should have told you ages ago.”

He feels them pull him in tighter.

“I’m...I’m...” Richie is gasping for breath cause, fuck, he’s so afraid. There are people in his life that know he’s gay, but these people around him are actually fucking important to him.

Bev leans her head against Richie shoulder. “It’s ok, Rich. You don’t hav-”

“I’m gay.”

Silence. Oh fuck. This is when they disappear on him.

Then he’s getting smothered by them. He doesn’t know whose arm is whose but it doesn’t fucking matter. They’re all sobbing together.

“Oh Richie, man, we love you so much.”, Bill says.

“Yeah, Richie. You’ll always be our Trashmouth.”, Mike says.

Richie feels Bev peck him on the cheek. “Love you, Loser.”

For once in his life Richie doesn’t know what the fuck to say. He just starts crying.

He doesn’t tell them about his feelings for Eddie. How he’s been in love with the idiot since they were kids. He has a feeling they already know anyway.

He doesn’t tell them because he wants Eddie to be the first hear it. He just hopes he gets the chance to tell him.

It’s minutes or hours later, who the fuck knows, when the doctor shows up.

“Are you the group that brought in Mr. Kaspbrak?”

Richie shoots up, knocking his chair back. “Yes! Yes, he is - he is ok? Is he going to make it?” The words rushing out of his mouth.

He feels the others behind him. One of them grabs his arm to comfort him.

“He’s still in critical condition. He’s lost a lot of blood. We were able to stop the bleeding and give him a blood transfusion. He’s currently in the ICU. Hopefully he wakes up soon, but to be honest, there’s no way to know if and when he’ll wake up.”

Richie feels like his heart is breaking all over again. Eddie’s still alive but that could change at any minute. Fuck, he could never wake up!

“Can we see him?”, Richie asks, practically begging.

The doctor frowns. “Hmmm, like I said he’s still in pretty critical condition, but I can allow you in for 10 minutes. But only 10 minutes.”

“Oh fuck. Oh, thank you.”, Richie breathes out.

A nurse shows them to a room in the ICU. A curtain is blocking the bed from their view. Richie’s afraid to step into the room, afraid to break whatever magic is keeping Eddie alive. Mike gently pushes him forward.

He steps around the curtain and sees Eddie laying in the hospital bed. Eddie looks like he got hit by a train. Or stabbed by an alien monster. His chest is completely wrapped in bandages, and a fresh cotton pad is on his cheek where Bowers stabbed him. He’s paler than normal and he’s connected to a million different wires and IVs. He’s even hooked up to a breathing machine.

Richie crumples in on himself, silent tears rolling down his cheeks. The Losers gently guide him into a chair.

Eddie’s still alive. There’s still hope he can come out of this.

It’s been two days since Eddie came out of surgery. He’s still unconscious but he’s finally stabilized. Just this morning they let the Losers stay in Eddie’s room instead of the waiting room.

Over the last two days all of the Losers took turns going back to the Townhouse to take a proper shower and get a couple hours of sleep. All of them except Richie. Richie refused to leave the hospital. He wouldn’t forgive himself if he wasn’t there when Eddie woke up. The Losers brought him food, gently forcing him to eat.

Richie’s just glad they’re allowed to stay in Eddie’s room. He pretends to watch whatever shitty thing is on the TV, but he can’t keep his eyes from slowly drifting back to Eddie. It comforts him to watch Eddie’s chest rise and fall. The breathing machine was removed the previous day so he’s at least breathing on his own.

Richie wants to reach over and hold Eddie’s pale hand. He wants

Eddie to know he and the rest of the Losers are there. They'll get through this together.

All the Losers are there now, although he thinks it might be Ben's turn to go get a little shut eye.

Shouting in the hallway brakes Richie out of his thoughts.

“WHERE IS HE? WHERE IS MY HUSBAND? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH HIM?”

He hears nurses trying to calm the person, but they get drowned out by more shouting. Then there's stomping and a woman bursts into the room.

“Oh my god, Eddie-Bear! What happened to you!”, the woman sobs, throwing herself across the room and falling on Eddie's still form.

Richie jumps out of his chair and tries to pull her off.

“HEY! What the fuck do you think you're doing!? Don't you see that he's literally wrapped like a fucking mummy!”

She turns on him, fire in her eyes.

“And who are you? Who are ALL of you?” She eyes all of the them like they're there to steal one of Eddie's kidneys.

Bev steps forward. “Please, let us explain Mrs-”

“Are you the one that called my Eddie?” She stabs a finger at Bev. “Eddie was so upset. He came home after getting into a car accident. I tried to comfort him by making him his favorite cup of herbal tea but he was so frantic. He just ran around the house packing, talking about how one of his friends called him and he had to go! He just had to GO! He wouldn't tell me anything!”

“Ma'am, we're Eddie's friends. We're the ones that brought him-”, Ben tries to say.

“NO! I don't want to hear it! I want you out of here! You've done enough to my Eddie! Get out!” Her face turns bright red with anger.

Before Richie can get his hands on the woman to *throttle* her there a dozen nurses rushing into the room. They push the Losers out.

Richie doesn't have to ask who the woman is and what gives her the fucking right to kick them out of Eddie's room. Richie finally had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Kaspbrak.

2. Chapter Two

It Was Always You

Chapter Two

Richie's POV

It's been a week since Myra barged into Eddie's room and kicked them out.

Richie doesn't know how the hospital got her number, but if he had to guess it's probably Eddie's fault. The fucker probably had a card in his wallet specifically for emergencies, listing all of his non-existent allergies, his blood type, and Myra's fucking contact info.

Everyone is staying at the Townhouse, except Mike. It was only a couple of days ago the police declared that Eddie's room was no longer a crime scene. There is still a small piece of yellow caution tape hanging from the door frame.

The morning after they killed Pennywise, while Eddie was in surgery, a maid had come into Eddie's room to find it splattered with blood. Needless to say, the police were called. At the same time, across town, the Assistant Librarian came into work to find a dead body in the middle of the library. It was a very exciting day in Derry fucking Maine.

The police identified the body as Henry Bowers. It took a couple of days but they connected his blood to the bloodbath at the Townhouse. They found the Losers at the Townhouse, after Mayra had kicked them out. They wanted to know what happened in Eddie's room, how did Eddie end up in the hospital, and what happened at the library?

While Bill isn't very good with endings, he's good at filling in the gaps. He explained how Bowers had stabbed Eddie in his room. Eddie then stabbed Bowers and escaped only for them to find Bowers had

fled. Bill said they rushed Eddie directly to the hospital after that; they have no idea what happened to Bowers in the library.

Richie thinks about the axe he killed Bowers with and vaguely remembers one of the Losers taking it when they left the library. It doesn't really matter as the police seem to be pleased with their answers and they don't push it any further. This is fucking Derry after all.

Richie calls the hospital multiple times every day. And every day it's the same thing. Eddie is still unconscious and hasn't shown any sign of waking up. Richie's charmed his way with the nurses so they're very sweet when he calls, sorry they can't give him better news.

It's early in the morning. Richie sits on his bed and calls the hospital like he does every morning while he drinks the shitty coffee from the Townhouse.

"Hello, Derry General."

"Uh, hi, this is Richie Tozier. I'm calling about-"

"Oh, Richie! Good Morning!" It's Ashley. She's the head nurse of the ICU and she's Richie's favorite. She takes great care of Eddie, and always gives Richie the most detailed reports on how Eddie is doing. She's also very vocal about her dislike for Mayra. Yeah, Richie likes Ashley a lot.

"Oh, hi, Ashley. Just doing my morning check-in." He tries to sound cheerful, but it comes out flat.

"Well, his blood pressure this morning was 100/70 and we just gave him a fresh drip."

"Good, good." He has no idea what any of that means.

"Hey, this probably isn't my place to say.", she whispers into the phone, "But his wife has been talking to the head doctor. She wants to transfer him to New York City, claiming he can get better care there or some bullshit like that."

Richie gasps into the phone. "What!? Can she - can she fucking do

that!?”

“I’m afraid to say that she can. She has legal authority since he’s unconscious. I talked to the doctor and highly advised him against it since he’s not healthy enough to be moved. I don’t know if he’ll listen to me, but I...I wanted to let you know.”

Richie wants to rush over to the hospital and throw that woman out of a window.

“Well, thank you. I really appreciate you telling me. I’ll call back at my usual lunch time hour, ok?”

He hangs up and falls back onto the bed. Fuck. Could it get any worse?

It was a stupid question.

The five Losers are out at some crappy diner for lunch. Richie had told them what he found out that morning about Myra trying to transfer Eddie. They’re all silent as they munch on their food, absorbing the information. Richie just pushes his food around on the plate.

Bill is the first to break the silence. “Hey guys, I know this is a really shitty timing, with Eddie being in the hospital and all, but I need...I need to get back to my wife.”

“Of course, man, do what you gotta do.”, Mike says.

Bill nods but he’s staring at Richie. He looks desperate, silently asking Richie not to hate him for breaking up what is left of the Losers Club.

“Yeah, yeah, go see if you can finally scrap together an ending that’s worth my fucking money.”, Richie cracks.

Bill smiles. “Thanks guys.”

“You know I’m probably going to have to take off soon myself.”, Bev adds. “I need to really start focusing on moving my divorce forward.”

Ben grasps Bev’s hand that’s resting on top of the table. “Yeah, me too, my company is doing fine without me at the moment, but I’m going to have to put somethings in place if I’m going to be gone much longer. I mean...I’m going to take some time off to...” Ben starts turns bright red.

Bev squeezes Ben’s hand. “We’re going to go spend some time at Ben’s vacation home. Just relax and figure out what’s next. Together.” Bev and Ben are smiling at each other. It makes Richie want to throw his lunch at them.

“That’s great, guys. We’re all so happy for you.”, Bill says.

“Yeah, fucking, finally. I mean, come on, took you guys long enough.”, Mike snorts out.

“I’m sorry? What was that? You’re going to have to speak louder.”, Bev says as she throws a fry at Mike.

They break into soft laughter and they move the topic onto something else. Richie sinks back into the booth and keeps his mouth shut.

To be honest, he’s surprised they’ve all stayed this long. He’s half convinced it’s so they can take care of his sorry ass. This past week they’ve woken him up every morning so he wouldn’t wallow the day away. They made him leave his room for food and they got him to take a few bites of food here and there.

Richie isn’t mad at them for leaving. He gets it. They all had lives before this. If anything, he’s jealous.

Bill is going back to his wife. Ben and Bev have finally found each other. Mike has decided he’s going to finally leave Derry and travel. Everyone knows where they’re going next, except Richie.

Richie did have a life before this whole shit storm. He’s not a super

famous comedian, but he's done pretty well for himself. He books big venues and his shows always sell out. He has a nice place in Malibu, but he's only there half the time since he's been traveling for his tour.

Oh, that's right, his tour. He forgot all about his tour, which he was literally in the middle of when he received Mike's call. He left without saying a word to his manager. He's received numerous calls, voicemails, and texts. First his manager was confused, then annoyed, and now he's just outright pissed.

Richie knows he needs to man the fuck up and face the music, but he's convinced his manager is just going to dump him for the little stunt he pulled. Although, if Richie's honest with himself, there's another reason he doesn't want to talk to his manager.

He's tired of getting up on stage, performing someone else's work, and getting applauded for it. At first, he didn't mind, cause fuck, he liked getting paid. Although as the years went by the happiness started to wear off and it started to feel like a fucking job.

He wants to perform his own material, which surprise surprise, is kind of queer. He'd been writing his own material for years but he was always too chickenshit to show it to his manager.

Well no more! Richie "Trashmouth" Tozier did not survive killing a gigantic spider-clown to go right back to performing someone else's shitty material! He's going to start performing his own shitty material, god damnit!

Richie slumps further down into the booth. It all felt pointless though, with Eddie's life hanging in the balance.

Another week has gone by and Bill, Ben, and Bev have left.

They created a group chat on Facebook so they can keep in touch. Mike and Richie send updates on Eddie, who is still in Derry General

even though Myra keeps pushing to get him transferred. Bill sends pics from the movie set he's working on, and Ben & Bev send pictures of sunsets from Ben's vacation home and his boat. The fuckers.

Richie is now staying with Mike at the library. He's helping Mike pack. Mike hasn't given a specific date when he's leaving town but Richie can feel it slowly creeping closer.

He tries not to think about it as he stuffs book after book into a box. God, Mike should burn all these books and call it a day.

Richie's phone rings in his pocket. He pulls it out and looks at the screen. It's Spencer, his manager.

Fuck. He doesn't want to have this conversation right now. He's not ready. He answers anyway.

"Hello?", Richie squeezes his eyes shut bracing for impact.

"RICHIE! WHAT. THE. FUCK. MAN! I have been calling you non-stop for weeks! You literally disappeared without a fucking word! I had to cancel all your tour stops and had to refund everyone's money! Do you know what a fucking mess you have caused!"

"I'm sorry, Spen. I'm sorry man. There's something I had to go do. Something super impor-"

"Where the fuck are you?"

"What? I'm - I'm in Derry."

"Where the hell is Derry?"

"It's - It's in Maine. I grew up here."

During this conversation Richie walks out of Mike's place to the front of the library. He needs to move around to work out the nervous feeling that is building up in his stomach. Or maybe he just needs to throw up.

Richie starts to walk away from the library into town.

“Oh my god, Richie. Whatever. Listen, just get your ass back here so we can get your tour back on track. I might be able to book you into more venues before words gets around you -”

“I can’t do that right now.”, Richie interrupts.

“What!? What do you mean you can’t do that!?", Spencer yells into Richie’s ear.

“Listen, Spen. I can’t come back right now, ok! I got something really important going on! I might be able to come back, in like, a month or two. But not right now.”

“Oh sure, Rich, let me just grab my planner and pencil you in.”, Spencer says sarcastically. “What the hell are you talking about!?”

Richie is getting pissed now. He knows he fucked up, but he also knows he’s not one of those egotistical celebrities that makes other people dance to his own drumbeat. Spencer should know that if Richie said something was important, it was fucking important! Fuck, he’d been his manager for years!

“It doesn’t matter, Spencer! If and when I come back, I’m not going back on that tour!”, Richie yells into the phone.

“What do you mean you’re not going back on the tour? What are you even talking about?”

“I’m not doing it anymore, Spencer. I’m not going to keep performing someone else’s material. I want to go back to my stuff, the stuff I started out with.”

“Are you fucking joking me right now? You want to talk about this after the shit you pulled!?”

“Yes, god damnit!”

Richie realizes that he has walked all the way from the library to the park and is now standing at the foot of that stupid, ugly Paul Bunyan statue. Jesus, of all of the places he could have walked, he came here.

“Richie, your material is all about girls. Your ex-girlfriends, what

your stupid ex-girlfriend did that annoyed you, how a hot girl dumped your ass.”, Spencer sounds like he’s explaining this to a kindergartener.

“I don’t fucking care!” Richie is exhausted with this conversation. He takes off his glasses with his free hand and pinches his nose.

“Well I fucking care! Your fan base would drop you so fucking fast if you started doing your own material! That’s not what they want. That’s not what they pay their good money for! We have worked so hard and now you just want to throw it all away!?”

“Fuck you, Spencer! I don’t want their fucking money!”, Richie yells into his phone. A mother who is walking by with her daughter through the park gives Richie a look and starts to pull her daughter a little faster.

“Yeah, well, good luck with that Richie. You fucker.”, Spencer spits out before he hangs up.

Richie drops the phone to his side, puts his glasses back on, and looks up at the Paul Bunyan statue.

“What the fuck are you looking at?”

Richie plops down on a park bench. Well, it’s official, Richie has literally hit rock bottom. His best friend is still unconscious in the ICU, he’s not allowed to see him due to his bitch of a wife, all the other Losers are moving on with their lives, and now he doesn’t have a job.

The thing about Hollywood that people don’t realize is that it’s small. Everyone knows everyone. In about an hour Richie will be blacklisted from all the other management firms. No one will touch him with a ten-foot pole.

He doesn’t know how long he’s been sitting there. Richie gets up and starts to walk back toward the library, flipping off Paul Bunyan as he goes.

Maybe it’s for the best. Maybe he’ll start over again under a stage name. He’ll have to go back to doing gigs in shitty smoke-filled bars,

but at least he'll be doing his own material. He shutters when he realizes he'll probably need to get a job on the side to afford even the most mundane of things.

It's pretty dark outside now. The street lights have come on, giving the streets of Derry a warm, cozy feel. Richie finds himself back inside the library as the last rays of light fade. He heads towards the stairs that go up to Mike's place. He'll find Mike and ask if he wants to go grab dinner. As if Richie is actually hungry.

"Mr. Tozier? Excuse me, Mr. Tozier!", the Assistant Librarian gently yells to him.

"Um yeah?", he heads over to the main desk which she's sitting behind.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Tozier, but someone has been calling the library asking for you all afternoon."

Richie notices that she has the library phone in her hand, her other hand covering the bottom receiver.

"You have good timing. They're actually on the line now if you want to talk to them." She hands him the phone.

"Ok..." Richie says as he grabs the phone.

Who the fuck would be calling him here? The Losers have his cell phone number and his manager just dumped his ass.

"Hello?", Richie says, half convinced its Pennywise back from the fucking dead.

"OH, about fucking time! Where the fuck have you been, asshole?"

Richie gapes at the phone, all thoughts completely whipped from his brain.

"Eddie?"

Notes for the Chapter:

The next chapter will be from Eddie's POV.

3. Chapter Three

It Was Always You

Chapter Three

Eddie's POV

Eddie doesn't know where he is; all he knows is that everything hurts. God, is he dead? Death shouldn't hurt this *much* though.

Eddie slowly opens his eyes but is blinded by a light shining directly in his face. He moans.

“Eddie? Oh my gosh, Eddie, are you awake?”

Eddie feels someone grab his arm. They squeeze a little too tight. He moans again.

“Eddie! Oh my gosh. Oh my gosh. I’m going to get the nurse! NURSE! NURSE!”, their voice fades out as they run out of the room.

His eyes slowly adjust to the light. He opens them as much as he can without them burning and looks around. He’s in a hospital. He’s been in enough of them throughout his life he should have guessed by the smell alone.

How the fuck is he is in a hospital?

The last thing he remembers is throwing the fence railing into Pennywise’s razor sharp mouth and then leaning over Richie, who had fallen out of the Deadlights. He remembers grabbing onto Richie, so proud of himself, proud that he took action for once in his pathetic life.

And, then, pain. God, there was so much *pain*. He doesn’t remember much after that. There’re other memories but they’re fuzzy. Someone cradling his head in their lap. Their warmth surrounding Eddie and whispering in his ear “Please don’t leave-”

“Mr. Kaspbrak!”

Eddie looks at the door. He sees a doctor, a couple of nurses, and Myra staring at him.

Myra? What in the hell is she doing here?

“Mr. Kaspbrak, it’s so good to see you awake.”, the doctor says as he enters.

The nurses rush in and surround him on both sides, checking vital signs. The doctor stops at the foot of his bed. Myra sits in the chair to his left, tears shining in her eyes.

“Where am I?”, Eddie asks.

“You’re in Derry General Hospital. You were stabbed. You’ve suffered pretty extensive damage. Luckily your friends were able to get you here in time for us to do something about it.”, the doctor explains.

“My...friends?” Eddie hears Myra scoff. Eddie is so confused. If his friends brought him here where were they?

“You’ve been unconscious for over two weeks.”, the doctor continues, “It’s a miracle you woke up. We were about to transfer you to New York.”

“Wait - what!?”

“Oh Eddie, dear. I’m so glad you’re awake!”, Myra pushes her way through the nurses and grabs Eddie’s arm. “You had me so worried! I knew something like this was going to happen when you left the house without telling me where you were going! And then, I get this call from the hospital saying you’d been *stabbed!*”

“Myra, please, you’re hurting me.”, Eddie says as he tries to pull his arm away from her.

“Oh, Eddie-Bear. It’s ok. It’s going to be ok now. I told those people, those horrible people, they needed to go.”

“Wait, you - you kicked my friends out?”, Eddie stops struggling to

get his arm back and just glares at Myra.

“Of course! You don’t need them, Eddie-Bear. You just need your own sweet wife to take care of you.”, Myra lifts one hand to stroke Eddie’s injury free cheek. He flinches back.

“What the fuck, Myra! You kicked - you kicked my friends out after they saved me!? They’re my friends!”

“Shhh, Eddie. No, you’re confused. They’re the ones that put you here.”, Myra coos, trying to comfort him like a child.

“NO! NO! Don’t you dare do that!”, Eddie yells.

“Mr. Kaspbrak, you need to calm down. You’re still healing.”, the doctor says as he tries to wedge himself between Eddie and Myra. He’s not successful.

“Where are they? I want to see them!”, Eddie yells.

Before Myra can get a word in edgewise the doctor and nurses start to drag her away from Eddie and out of the room.

“Mrs. Kaspbrak, I’m sorry, but you’re going to have to leave while we get your husband’s vitals under control.”, the doctor says.

After they get her out of the room one of the nurses comes back in to give Eddie a sedative. Eddie feels it quickly take effect as his muscles start to relax. His eyelids start to fall downward.

Before he falls asleep, he manages to ask the nurse, “Could you bring my friends in?”

“I’m sorry, sir. I don’t know how to reach them.”, she says with a sad smile on her face.

Eddie’s heart pangs with disappointment as he drifts off to a dreamless sleep.

It's only a few hours later Eddie wakes up. The chair next to his bed is empty. No Myra. No one from the Losers Club.

He rings for a nurse and asks if he can have his cell phone. He remembers entering the other Losers' contact information during dinner. The nurse comes back with his cell phone and wallet, but unfortunately his cell phone is completely destroyed. It must have happened during the fight with Pennywise. Fuck.

"Mr. Kaspbrak, your wife is asking if she can come in to see you.", she says on her way out.

"No!", the words flying from his lips before he has time to even think.
"No, please. I don't want to see her right now."

The nurse nods and leaves the room.

Eddie's all alone with no way to contact the Losers. He doesn't even know if they're still in town. It has been two and half weeks since their fight with that motherfucking clown. They've probably all skipped town by now, they have lives of their own after all.

Eddie starts to cry which causes ripples of pain to shoot through him. He doesn't care though. He feels raw and utterly alone.

He's felt alone most of his life as a matter of fact. Even when he was with Myra. The only time he didn't feel that way was when he was with the other Losers. It felt amazing to be part of a group that excepted and understood all of his eccentricities. He felt like he *belonged*.

Of course, he forgot all of that after he moved away from Derry. All through his adult life he always had this feeling that something was missing, but he could never put his finger on it. That is, until the night they meet up again at the Jade of the Orient. Everyone looked the same, just older and more weathered.

He sat next to Richie at dinner. Fucking *Richie*. He forgot how much of an idiot Richie was, and apparently, still is. Richie cracked the stupidest jokes Eddie has ever heard all through dinner. Eddie doesn't

remember the last time he laughed so much.

The thing is, Richie is Eddie's favorite of the group. He would never tell Richie that cause, fuck, he would never hear the end of it. He knows it's kinda weird, because all Richie ever did was shit on his mom, but they always had a special bond. There would be times when Richie would tease Eddie to the point where he wanted to explode. Then, there would be times when Eddie would be unusually quiet and Richie would buy him an ice cream cone.

He also remembers when Richie would come over to his house in the middle of the night, knocking on his bedroom window. Eddie would always tell him 'to go the fuck away', but he would always let Richie inside in the end. They would stay up late, reading comic books on his bed, trying to stifle their laughter behind their hands so they wouldn't wake up his Ma. Eddie didn't know why Richie always came to his house when he could have gone to some of the other Loser's houses. It didn't matter though; Eddie and Richie were best friends.

He wishes Richie was here right now. Richie would distract him from the massive amounts of pain he's in.

Eddie wonders if they're still at the Townhouse. It's late in the afternoon so they probably haven't gone out to dinner yet. He rings the nurse again and asks for the number. She comes back minutes later with the number written on a piece of paper. He dials it on the hospital phone next to his bed.

"Hello, Derry Townhouse. How can I help you?", a friendly voice says on the other line.

"Hello, I'm calling for Richie Tozier. He's in room 201.", Eddie licks his lips praying Richie's still there.

"I'm sorry, sir. Mr. Tozier checked out a little over a week ago."

Eddie feels his heart drop into his stomach. "Ok, how about Bill Denbrough?"

"I'm really sorry, sir. He's not here either."

Eddie asks for Bev and Ben but they're gone too. He tries not to take

it personally as he hangs up the phone. They all have their own lives; they knew he was in good hands being in the hospital. Nothing to freak out about.

Eddie calls the nurse back and asks for the number to the Derry library. Mike is his last chance. If Mike left town too Eddie doesn't know what he's going to do.

"Hello, Derry Library.", a man says.

"Hello, is Mike Hanlon there? I'd like to speak with him."

"I'm sorry. Mike's stepped out for the moment. Would you like to leave a message for him?"

Oh, thank fuck! Mike is still in town. Thank god for small miracles.

"Yes, please tell him Eddie Kaspbrak called and that I'm...uh...awake. He knows where to find me."

He hears scribbling, "Ok, great. I'll give this to him as soon as he's back. I think he's currently out with Mr. Tozier."

Wait, what!? Tozier?

"Wait, wait, you mean Richie Tozier?", Eddie practically yells into the phone.

"Yeah, he's been staying with Mike for the last week or so. If you would like, I can give your message to him if I see him before Mike."

"Yes, yes, please do! Tell him to call me right away."

Eddie thanks him and hangs up the phone. Richie's still in town! He hasn't left! Eddie's heart starts to race at the thought that he's going to see Richie soon. And Mike. He's going to see Richie *and* Mike. Hopefully he'll be able to see them soon and he'll be able to apologize for Myra kicking them out.

It's about an hour later and neither Richie or Mike have called. Eddie is getting antsy. He doesn't know how much longer he can stand watching shitty daytime television.

He calls the library again but there's no sign of either of them. He watches another episode of *Days of our Lives*. He can literally feel his brain melting.

He calls a third time. Nope.

Where in the fuck could they be? He understands Mike has a job to do, at the library he might add, but where in the hell is Richie? What could his sorry ass be doing?

He manages to wait another hour before calling again. Nothing. He debates getting out of bed and walking around Derry until he finds Richie, and then punching him in the face!

He waits a measly twenty minutes before calling for a fifth time.

“I’m sorry. I don’t know when they’re going to be back.” He’s talking to a woman now. She’s a little exasperated at this point because she’s picked up Eddie’s last three calls.

“Ok, ok. I’ll call back-”, Eddie says.

“Oh wait, wait!”, she pulls away from the phone making it difficult for Eddie to hear her. It sounds like she’s yelling at someone.

There’s rustling on the phone as if it’s being handed to someone.

“Hello?”, a male voice says over the line. Eddie knows who is it immediately. Richie *fucking* Tozier.

“OH, about fucking time! Where the fuck have you been, asshole?” Eddie screams into the phone. His heart is pounding in his ears.

“Eddie?”, Richie gently whispers.

“No, it’s fucking Pennywise. Who the fuck do you think it is?”

“Eddie? Eddie!”, Richie’s repeats, each word gaining more energy behind it. “Oh man, you’re - you’re finally-”

“Awake, yes. Where the hell have you been? I’ve been trying to reach you all afternoon.”

“I was just...out...thinking about...”

“Could you come over?”, Eddie interrupts before Richie can finish his sentence. “It fucking sucks to be in a hospital by myself.”

“What? You want me to come over? I mean – yeah - fuck yeah. I’ll be there before you know it, Eds.”, Richie says before he hangs up.

Eddie puts the phone down, leans back into his pillow, and changes the channel to some stupid nighttime procedural. He waits for Richie to arrive, a grin plastered on his face.

4. Chapter Four

It Was Always You

Chapter Four

Richie's POV

Richie is literally running to Derry General. He wishes his diet didn't consist of burgers, tacos, and beer cause, fuck, it hurts to breath.

While he's waiting at a stoplight, shuffling his feet back and forth, he calls Mike.

“Hey, Rich. What's up?”, Mike picks up.

“MIKE! It's Eddie! He's awake! I just got a call from him and I'm heading over to the hospital right now!”, Richie yells into the phone as he tries to catch his breath.

“What!? Are you - are you serious?”

“Yes, I'm fucking serious! You think I would joke about this?” The walk sign is on so he starts to run again. “I'll see you there, Mikey.” He hangs up.

He skids into the hospital entrance and rushes to the reception desk.

“Hi, I'm here to see Eddie Kaspbrak.”

“Of course, he's in room 503. Let me check you-”, the nurse begins to say.

“Thank you.”, he says and then he's jogging down the hall before she can stop him.

He barges into the room and stops just inside the doorway. He puts his hands on his knees, gasping for air. He looks up to find Eddie fucking Kaspbrak staring at him with big brown eyes and his mouth

in a O.

Eddie cracks a smile at him. “Hey, asshole.”

Richie grins back, still panting. “Hey yourself.”

Mike arrives twenty minutes after Richie. Richie is sitting in the chair next to Eddie, downing a Gatorade.

Mike gives Eddie a light hug. “It’s so good to see you, man. I called the other Losers on my way here. I told them we’ll give them a call when you’re feeling up for it.”, Mike says as he pulls up a chair on the other side of Eddie’s bed.

“Thanks, Mike. That would be great”, Eddie grins.

“So when did you wake up?”, Mike asks.

“Just this morning. My cell phone got damaged in our fight so I kept calling the library until I got a hold of *someone*.”, Eddie frowns at Richie as he says this. Richie wonders why he’s the only one on the receiving end of Eddie’s ire. Mike wasn’t at the library either.

Richie is in the middle of taking a big gulp of Gatorade so he just makes grunting noises and puts both his hands up in the way of an apology. Richie sees Eddie roll his eyes.

“Anyway, when did the others leave?”, Eddie says looking back at Mike.

“Oh, well, Bill left about a week ago to be with his wife, and Ben and Bev left shortly after. They’re spending some time together at Ben’s vacation home. They felt really bad about leaving you, with everything being so uncertain about your condition-”

“It’s ok. I understand. Hey...uh, thank you, you guys. You know, for

getting me out of that hell hole.”

“Oh, you should be thanking Richie. He carried you out of Neibolt himself.”, Mike says with a glint in his eye, which he directs at Richie. Richie glares at Mike. A smirk spreads across Mike’s face.

“Really? I didn’t you know you were that in shape, Rich. I thought stand-up comedians only needed to stand for an hour at a time.”, Eddie says smirking at Richie.

“Hey, I’ll have you know I have a stool on stage in case I get winded.”, Richie grins, gearing up for a tease fest.

Mike interrupts, “Hey, wanna give the other Losers a call? They would love to see you, Eddie.”

God damnit, Mike. He just had to ruin the moment.

They group FaceTime with the others, three little windows on screen. Bill, Ben, and Bev share their relief that Eddie’s awake and recovering. They apologize they couldn’t be there in person. When Eddie’s feeling better, they’ll all get together, minus the killer clown.

The conversation turns around to what happened in the fight with Pennywise after Eddie was injured and the subsequent days after Eddie’s surgery. Richie lets the others explain. He doesn’t want to relive any of that nightmare, not knowing if Eddie was ever going to wake up. Thankfully, the Losers don’t mention the empty shell of a person Richie was while Eddie was unconscious.

When they mention Myra kicked them all out of the hospital Eddie gets an uncomfortable look on his face. “Hey, I’m sorry Myra treated you guys like that. You didn’t deserve that after everything you’ve done for me.”, Eddie says shyly.

“Hey, if you don’t mind us asking, where is Mrya?”, Ben says on the other end of the line. “It didn’t look like she was ever going to let you out of her sight again when we left.”

Richie has been wondering the exact same thing ever since he got Eddie’s phone call. He hasn’t brought it up though cause, as long as she’s not here, he didn’t give a fuck where she is.

“Oh, well, after I woke up, I found out she had kicked you guys out. She started saying these horrible things and was acting like...well, I... I told her I wanted her to leave. She’s still in town, but I refuse to see her.”, Eddie says.

The conversation moves on, but Richie’s mind is stalling. Eddie actually kicked his wife out of his hospital room!? Not only that, but the first person Eddie called after he woke up was Richie! Ok, he was also trying to get ahold of Mike too, but still! He asked for Richie to come to the hospital when he didn’t want his own wife there!

Richie smiles to himself and watches Eddie laugh. Richie finally feels content for the first time in days.

After they’re done with the call Mike and Richie go down to the cafeteria. They grab some food and bring it back up to Eddie’s room to eat. The food tastes like shit but Richie manages to eat two burger and some fries. Eddie has a look of pure disgust on his face as he watches Richie eat. Richie loves it.

It’s getting late. All three of them are yawning.

“Hey guys, I think I’m going to head out.”, Mike says as he stands up, “I have to go to work tomorrow to continue training my replacement. I’ll see you tomorrow Eddie.” He gives Eddie a light squeeze on the shoulder.

And then, it’s just Richie and Eddie.

“Hey, you should get some sleep too.”, Eddie says, “You look like shit.”

“Shut the fuck up.”, Richie grabs the remote and starts flipping channels. “I’m not the one that got stabbed like a shish kabob.”

“They’re going to kick you out, Rich. I’m pretty sure visiting hours

are almost over.”

“Psst, visiting hours don’t apply to me. I charmed my way with the nurses. They’ll let me stay. Besides, I’m not going to leave your sorry ass alone. Knowing you, you’ll probably get stabbed again while you sleep.”

Eddie huffs. “Hey, I gotta say, I was surprised when I found out you were still in town.”

Richie stops flicking channels and frowns at Eddie. “What do mean you were *surprised*?”

“I just mean, you’re a big-time comedian.” Eddie shrugs. He looks uncomfortable, like he didn’t mean to get into this conversation. “Don’t you have, like, a tour you need to get back to? Don’t get me wrong, man, it’s great you’re here. I just-”

“No tour. Not anymore.” Richie swallows dryly. “I – ah - told them I couldn’t come back until...well...I didn’t know when you were going to wake up.” Richie’s cheeks start to burn.

“oh.” Eddie’s face is blank, like he’s having a hard time processing this information.

Richie goes back to flipping channels so he doesn’t have to look at Eddie. “Besides, I told my manager I didn’t want to continue doing someone else’s shitty material. I told them I wanna go back to my old stuff, but they said ‘no thank you’ and dumped my ass.”

“Your old stuff?”

“Yeah.” Richie says softly, dropping the remote into his lap. He didn’t intend to have this conversation now, but he also doesn’t know when or how it was going to come up again. Fuck.

“Yeah, my old stuff.” He stares at his hands in his lap. “I shouldn’t say old cause I’m actually still writing it. But I’ve always been too big of a coward to show it to my manager. Instead, I just kept performing the shit they gave me.” Richie’s heart is pounding in his ears.

“What? What do you mean they didn’t want you to do your own

material? Your stuff is stupid, but it's funny. But, like, funny for stupid people.”

Before Richie knows it, the words literally start pouring out of his mouth. “They didn’t want me to do my own material cause it was about, like, ex-boyfriends, and – and” He is literally word vomiting now. “Shit like - finding out kissing boys isn’t any different than kissing girls, except they have like stubble, which feels like fucking sand paper- “

“But your material now-” Eddie’s voice is soft, confused. Richie still can’t find the courage the look at Eddie.

“Yeah, I know! It’s all about stupid ex-girlfriends, which I’ve never fucking had, and shit like that. They didn’t let me do my own material cause they didn’t think it would work with my quote unquote target audience. It’s 2016 and Hollywood is still stuffing people in the closet.” Richie finally manages to shut his trap. He squeezes his closed as he braces for Eddie’s reaction.

“oh.” A beat of silence. “That fucking sucks, man.” Eddie sounds genuinely sympathetic.

Richie cracks one eye open and glances over at Eddie. Eddie’s smiling softly at him, a look of sadness and compassion on his face. Richie lets out a breath he didn’t know he was holding.

“So, uh, if you couldn’t tell, uh, I’m - uh - gay.” Richie says the last word quietly. “You know, cause I - I talked about kissing boys and stuff.”

Eddie’s smile turns into a grin. “Yes, thank you, Richie. I know how to pick up on contextual clues, thank you.” Eddie chuckles.

“So, uh...”, Richie doesn’t know what to say. He feels like his heart might burst out of his chest. He just told Eddie he was gay.

Eddie puts his hand out. “Give me the remote. This show fucking sucks.”

With the remote in hand Eddie starts to flip channels. Richie leans back in his chair and tries to breath normally. They fall into a

comfortable silence and then they start bickering about what show to watch, reminding Richie of their late-night sleepovers.

Notes for the Chapter:

Hello! I'm going to posting the next two chapters next weekend so please subscribe if you want to get notified!

5. Chapter Five

It Was Always You

Chapter Five

Eddie's POV

Eddie wakes up the next morning to find Richie sound asleep in a hospital chair next to his bed. Richie's glasses are slanted on this face. Eddie wants to reach over and adjust them, but it's difficult to move. Eddie ends up just staring at Richie instead.

Richie's grown into his lankiness, his shoulders have widened out, and he has stubble on his chin. He still wears loud, obnoxious t-shirts and his curls are a wild mess, although it looks like his hairline is receding slightly. Eddie chuckles to himself. He might be shorter than Richie, but at least he still has most of his hair.

Eddie's not surprised Richie's gay. All Richie ever did as a kid was talk about his fucking dick. Thinking about Richie kissing boys, as a teen or even as an adult, makes Eddie's stomach flutter for some reason. A blush starts to stain his cheeks.

Richie groans next to him. He yawns impossibly wide and stretches his long limbs out. He adjusts his glasses and turns to Eddie. "Good morning, Eds."

"Don't call me that." Eddie's way of saying good morning.

"Uh huh, whatever.", Richie yawns into his hand.

"Man, when was the last time you brushed your teeth or took a shower?", Eddie wrinkles his nose.

"Hey, I slept in this shitty chair all night to protect your ass. You should be nice to me."

There's a knock at the door, a nurse steps in. "Excuse me, Mr.

Kaspbrak. I'm here to help you with your morning bath."

Eddie can't stand up on his own. He's still too weak so he gets daily baths from the nurses. It's embarrassing, like he's a child or something. But at the same time, he can't stand to be dirty.

Richie jumps up next to him. "This is where I leave you, Eddie Spaghetti. I'll see you around lunch time, k?" And, then, he's gone.

Eddie's bath is done and he's eating lunch in bed now. The bath took forever since they had to wrap his bandages so they wouldn't get infected, and the nurses have to roll him his way and that way. It's awful. He can't wait to be able to take a shower by himself.

He wonders when Richie's going to come back, but the thought is broken as Richie comes slinking into the room, his arms wrapped around his bulging t-shirt, like he's hiding something. His hair is wet and he's changed into different clothes.

"Hey, Eds. Look what I got. I got the good shit, man." Richie sits down in his chair next to Eddie and opens his shirt to show Eddie - multiple cups of pudding?

"Is that? Is that chocolate pudding?", Eddie laughs.

"Yeah, it's the *good* shit. I charmed my way with one of the lunch ladies and she gave me, like, six cups for free! Look at this shit!"

Richie dumps them on the table next to the bed and pulls out a spoon from his back pocket. Gross. He rips open one of the cups and starts to dig in.

"Oh my god, Richie. Please tell me that's not your lunch."

"Hey, this is way better than the shit you're eating." Richie already has pudding around his lips. Eddie briefly stares at it for a second

before reaching for a cup.

“Um, excuse me? Who said you could have some?” Richie tries to bat away Eddie’s hand but it’s only a halfhearted attempt.

“Shut up.” Eddie grabs a cup of pudding and starts to eat. Ok, he has to admit this is pretty good. It’s way better than the dried-out meatloaf the hospital gave him.

He looks over at Richie, who’s on his second cup of pudding already, to see Richie grinning at him like he knows Eddie loves it. What an *idiot*.

They manage to kill all six cups of pudding between them, three each. Eddie doesn’t think it’s a diet he should be sticking to if he wants to get out of the hospital any time soon, but fuck it.

Richie’s always had the ability to make Eddie forgot about the consciences for any given situation. Eddie has always been a step behind the others, too afraid or cowardly to do something. Then, Richie would be there prodding him along, giving Eddie confidence, and making him feel like he could do anything. Eddie’s always appreciated that about Richie.

“So what are you doing to do now?”, Eddie asks, licking his spoon clean. “You know, since your manager dumped you?”,

Richie shrugs. “I don’t know. Probably have to start all over again. Workshop my material in a shitty bar or something. What about you?”

Eddie stops licking his spoon. “Oh, uh. I’m...uh...I’m not sure.”

Eddie’s been so focused on getting better that he actually hasn’t thought about what’s next. Thinking about going back to his old life after all of this seems like a joke. Sure, he has a wife, a house, and a good job but it feels fake. He doesn’t remember actively choosing those things, they just *happened*.

God, he’s going to have to face Myra at some point. Every time she’s tried to visit, he’s refused to see her. He’s still mad at her for kicking his friends out, but there’s something else that has been bugging him

about Myra. The way she acted after he woke up, she was saying those horrible things about his friends, she was coddling and sweet talking him, trying to make him think his injuries were his friends' fault, how he only needed his sweet wife - Oh, god. *Oh fuck.* Eddie thinks he's going to throw up the pudding he just ate.

It must show on his face because Richie is leaning forward. "Hey, you ok?"

"Yeah, I just - I was - I was just thinking about Myra."

"That seems like a bad choice."

"Shut the fuck up! It's just that she - oh my god - she reminds me of my - of my Ma."

Richie's eyes go extremely wide. He starts to open his mouth but Eddie interrupts him.

"Shut up! Shut up! I don't want to hear it! I know you thought it the minute you meet her, and I DO NOT want to hear it!" Eddie is breathing heavily now. "It's just - I don't know how I didn't see it before. She does nothing but coddles me, as if I'm this fragile thing that needs to be protected. Oh fuck, how did this happen?"

Eddie's crying now. He feels Richie's hand land on his, which is clutching the bedcovers.

"Hey, it's ok. We've all been leading pretty fucked up lives.", Richie says as he looks into Eddie's eyes. "With the way Bev talks about her ex-husband it sounds like she went and married her father, and my sorry ass is just now coming out of the closet."

Eddie sniffls. "It's just...I don't know how it happened. I didn't officially date anyone until Myra. We went out to dinner a few times and then she just declared we were dating. I just thought, ok, I guess this is how it works. Then years went by and Ma was getting sick. She kept pushing me to propose to Myra, and Myra was pushing me, so I just asked her. I can't go back to her. I won't go back to living with someone who treats me like that. I'm going to - I'm going to leave her."

Eddie realizes this as the words leave his mouth. It's never occurred to him before this second that leaving Myra was an option.

"Hey, good for you, Eds. She doesn't deserve you, man.", Richie says. Eddie feels Richie squeeze his hand.

They both look down at their entwined hands at the same time. Richie faces goes completely red and his eyes go wide as if he's been caught doing something he shouldn't. Richie snatches his hand back.

"So, uh, maybe you could reach out to Bev or something. You know, so she can give you information for her divorce lawyer.", Richie says as he fidgets in the chair. Eddie knows Richie does this when he's nervous.

"Oh, yeah. That's a good idea.", Eddie blinks.

Eddie smiles softly at Richie. Richie smiles back.

They start talking about Bev and Ben, how happy they seem to be. They wonder when Mike is going to leave town. The conversation drifts along comfortably, both of them enjoying each other's presence.

Eddie doesn't have to wait long to talk to Myra. It's late in the evening, and Eddie and Richie are watching Jeopardy while eating dinner. Richie keeps yelling out wrong answers, on purpose.

A nurse knocks on the door, "Excuse me, Mr. Kaspbrak. Your wife is here again." She sounds agitated. Myra was probably yelling at her.

Eddie lets out a big sigh. He might as well get this over with. "Rich, could you me a minute?"

"Sure, sure" Richie gives Eddie a look. Eddie knows Richie's trying to tell him he can do this. Richie squeezes his leg as he passes the bed

and leaves the room.

The nurse brings Myra into the room, she runs directly into the room and grabs Eddie's arm. "Oh, Eddie-Bear. Are you ok? Have these people been taking good care of you? They wouldn't let me see you. I told them you needed me. But they just-"

"I told them not to let you in.", Eddie says, yanking his arm back.

"What? No, no, you're confused. You wouldn't do that.", Myra sweet talks.

God, how did he not see the similarities between Myra and his Ma sooner?

"No, Myra, I told them I didn't want to see you."

"What? No...No-"

"Myra, please, don't make this difficult."

"Eddie, what you saying?" She's getting teary eyed.

"I want a divorce.", Eddie blurts out before she can start full on crying.

"What? Eddie, dear, what are you talking about? This must be the drugs talking. You're not thinking clearly."

"Myra, stop, that isn't going to work. We're not good for each other. We're not happy. I don't think we have ever been happy together. We were just together because it was - it was familiar.", he cringes.

"Eddie, please, who...", she's sobbing now, "who is going to take care of you?"

"Myself. I'm going to take care of myself, Myra." It feels good to say it. He feels like he found the part of himself that his Ma and Myra were trying to hide from him his entire life.

"Eddie-" She doesn't get a chance to continue. The doctor and three nurses have come running into the room.

‘Mrs. Kaspbrak, please, this isn’t good for him.’, the doctor says as he and two nurses drag her out.

The other nurse is giving Eddie a sedative. He didn’t notice it before but his heart is racing a million miles an hour. As the nurse leaves, he asks if she can bring Richie back in. She nods and goes in search of him.

Eddie looks down at his hands, which are shaking. He notices his gold wedding band. As the sedative starts to take effect, he pulls it off and throws it into the trash. Eddie looks up to find Richie standing in the doorway, grinning from ear to ear.

A month has passed. Eddie has made a lot of progress in his recovery. He and Richie have started to walk around the hospital after every meal. They sit outside when they can’t watch anymore daytime TV.

The doctor told Eddie this morning he’s going to be discharged in a week. Eddie will need to be careful; he still has a long way to go, but he doesn’t need day to day care anymore.

Eddie and Richie are sitting in the cafeteria now, watching the leaves fall outside. It’s late October in Derry. They were sitting outside before, but Eddie made them come in because he didn’t want to catch a cold.

Richie has been quiet all morning, ever since the doctor told them Eddie would be discharged soon. Eddie glances at Richie out of the corner of his eye. Richie is just staring down at his coffee, a slight frown on his face.

Eddie glances down at the cup of tea in his hands. He knew he was going to be leave the hospital at some point, but now that there’s an actual date he needs to start thinking about his future.

He knows he needs to go back to New York for divorce proceedings.

After he told Myra he wanted a divorce she kept trying to visit him in the hospital, but he refused to see her. He hasn't heard from her in the last week. She's probably gearing up for a fight.

Then there's his job. Eddie has been on medical leave while he's been in the hospital. He needs to officially resign. There's no way he can go back to work while he's still recovering. Eddie also wants to take the time to think about whether or not he actually likes his job. Like the rest of his life, he just ended up there.

Eddie's not sure what he's going to do after that though. Should he stay in New York? Should he move somewhere else?

Then, there's Richie. Richie, who has been by his side during this whole shitty ordeal. Eddie doesn't know how he would have gotten through everything without him. The days go by faster when Richie's around, even though they do the same thing every day. Even the most of mundane of things are fun with him, like watching Jeopardy or playing Go Fish.

Eddie wonders if Richie would want to come to New York with him. Maybe they could share a hotel room or something? Eddie's going to need help while he continues to recover and Richie can workshop his material in New York. There are a lot of dive bars in New York. Eddie also knows that he'll miss Richie. He doesn't want to imagine coming back from a divorce proceeding to an empty hotel room.

"Hey, so I was thinking-", Eddie starts.

"What have I told you about doing that.", Richie quips.

"God, do you ever shut up, Rich?"

"What? That was the first thing I said, in like, the last-"

Eddie doesn't want to hear anymore. "Want to come to New York with me?"

Richie gapes at Eddie. "Wha - What?"

Annoyed he has to repeat himself, "I said, do you want to come to New York with me? I'll need some help moving stuff out of the house

as well as someone to help me during my recovery. I also figured New York is a good place for you to workshop some stuff.”

Eddie can literally see the gears turning in Richie’s head.

“Yeah, sure, of course. I’m down. I’m totally down.”, Richie nods excitedly.

“Great.”, Eddie nods as he feels butterflies spreading through his stomach.

6. Chapter Six

It Was Always You

Chapter Six

Richie's POV

Eddie's getting discharged today. As luck would have it, it's the same day Mike is leaving Derry too. Mike and Richie are packing up the last of the boxes in Mike's apartment.

"So, you're heading to New York with Eddie, huh?" Mike asks as he tapes up a box.

"Yeah, going to have to make sure he doesn't fall into a drain or something." Richie's not really paying attention. He's thinking about how he's going to go pick up Eddie at the hospital and then get the *fuck* out of this town.

"So, you going to tell him how you feel or what?"

Richie trips and drops the box he's carrying right onto his foot. "Oh fuck!" He grabs his throbbing foot, sputtering as he looks up at Mike. "What!? What the fuck are you talking about?"

Mike raises his eyebrows. "I mean, it's kind of obvious how you feel about him. Come on, Rich, all you do is tease him."

"I tease all of you motherfuckers."

"Hmm, true, but not like you tease Eddie." A smirk is spreading across Mike's face.

Richie huffs, resigning to the fact he's been found out. "It's all the mom jokes, isn't it?"

"That, and the fact you can't stand it when Eddie isn't paying attention to you. Or how you always end up sitting next to him. OH!"

And how you use to grab his cheeks calling him cute.”

“Ok! Ok! I get it!”, Richie yells.

“Sorry, man.”, Mike chuckles.

“Do you - do you think he knows?”, Richie whispers.

“No, cause he’s just as much of an idiot as you are.”

Richie sighs.

“I think you should tell him though. I know you’ll regret it if you don’t.”

“You don’t know shit, Mikey.”

Richie doesn’t want to admit it but he knows Mike’s right. He’s relieved he gets to spend a little bit more time with Eddie in New York, but he doesn’t know how long it’s going to last.

Richie was actually thinking about asking Eddie if he could come with him. He just didn’t know how to ask without it sounding pathetic. *Please, Eddie, let me come to New York with you. My life is a train wreck. I just want to follow you around like a love-sick puppy dog.* [insert puppy dog eyes]

Oh, yes, and then there’s that. In the last month Richie has come to realize that’s he’s still head over heels in love with Eddie. At first, he thought it was just nostalgia, remembering the good ‘ol times with his best friend. NOPE. His love for Eddie is just as strong, if not stronger.

Being an adult means Richie has had his share of relationships. He’s been in relationships before but nothing serious. Some of them were one-night flings, some he went on a couple of dates with, but

none of them were someone he wanted to be in a fully committed relationship with. He thought he just wasn't a commitment kind of guy.

Wrong again. Spending the last month with Eddie has shown him how wrong he has been. He loves all the little moments he gets to share with Eddie – laughing with him, seeing Eddie's smile when he brings back a cup of pudding from the cafeteria, watching Eddie sleep. All of it. His heart was breaking at the thought that he was going to have to say goodbye to Eddie once he was discharged.

He doesn't have to worry about saying goodbye just yet though, but he knows there will come a time when they'll each have to go their separate ways. And once they do, he's terrified they're going to forget each other again. The Losers have been keeping in contact with each other but that might slowly fade away.

Richie wants to make sure that if they do forget each other he was completely honest with Eddie. Richie wants to do everything he can to keep the good memories alive. Eddie deserves to know the truth. Richie just hopes he's brave enough to tell him.

When Richie arrives at the hospital, he walks into Eddie's room to find the doctor walking Eddie through the medicine he's going to be taking. "Now, this is an antibiotic. You'll need to take it with food twice a day. Best to do it at breakfast and dinner."

Eddie's face has a fierce look of concentration on it, like he's setting his internal clock to remind himself when to take the pills.

The doctor notices Richie leaning in the doorway. "Ah, Mr. Tozier, good timing. I wanted to show you and Mr. Kaspbrak how clean and redress his wounds before you head out."

Richie begins to walk into the room just as Eddie starts to un-button his shirt. It makes Richie freeze. Neither Eddie or the doctor notice as

they unwrap the bandages around Eddie's chest. Richie's never seen Eddie without them. He always left the room when the nurses came to change them. Eddie's injury is fully exposed now. There's a long, angry line running from the middle of Eddie's chest down past his belly button. There are stitches running along the whole length of it.

"Now you're going to want to keep your wounds as dry and clean as possible to prevent infection.", the doctor says.

Richie snorts lightly. *You're preaching to the choir here, man.* Eddie gives Richie a look, basically telling him to keep his mouth shut. Richie actually manages to do just that.

"I recommend cleaning and redressing the wound twice a day. You can lightly wash it with soap and water. Pat it dry immediately afterward. You can then rub on an antibiotic ointment, like Neosporin, if you want. Now to redress the wound, you can just use gauze and some bandage clips. Now, Mr. Tozier, if you'll come here, I'll show you how to redress it."

Oh, *holy fuck*. Richie breathes in deeply as he steps up behind Eddie. Richie can now see there's another angry red line running down Eddie's back.

"Now, you'll want to wrap the gauze around his waist so it's completely covering the wound."

Richie unrolls the gauze in his hand. He reaches around Eddie so his arms are basically encircling his waist. He holds his hand right at the dip of Eddie's hip, holding the gauze in place as he starts to wrap it around Eddie. Richie knew he was going to be helping Eddie with his bandages, it just didn't occur to him that he was literally going to have to *hold Eddie in his arms* in order to do it! Richie can feel his cheeks burning. He's glad Eddie is facing away from him.

"That's good. Just don't do it too tight or too loose.", the doctor says.

Richie's done wrapping the wound. Eddie steps out of his arms and starts to put button up his shirt as the doctor gets him to signs his release forms.

Richie doesn't hear the doctor's final instructions. He's too busy trying to get control over of his rapidly beating heart.

Richie and Eddie are finally out of the hospital and they're in Richie's rental car. Richie's duffel bag is in the back seat being crushed by Eddie's two large suitcases.

"Ready to get the fuck out of this hell hole, Eds?"

Eddie has a look of pure joy on his face, like he's tasting true freedom for the first time. Eddie looks over at Richie and nods, "Let's do it."

Richie punches the gas and they're speeding out of Derry. They fly by the Townhouse, the library, the water tower, the Paul Bunyan statue, and then they're racing toward the Kissing Bridge. Something makes Richie hit the brakes before they can fully cross the bridge.

"What the hell, Rich!?", Eddie screams next to him. "What are you trying to do? Send me back to the hospital?"

Richie's panting, surprised by his sudden decision to stop. He looks over at Eddie whose hair is ruffled.

"Sorry, Eds. I – just -", he gulps.

He didn't plan this to do this now. He was thinking of doing this over a nice dinner in New York or something. Not on a shitty rickety bridge. Although, when does he ever take the time to actually think about something before doing it? Never.

"Sorry, I just...I want to show you something...you know, before we blow this popsicle stand."

"Ok?" Eddie's looking at him suspiciously, as if he thinks this is some kind of prank.

Before Richie can change his mind, he's gets out of the car. "Come on."

He hears Eddie huffing annoyingly in the car, and then he's following Richie over to the railing of the Kissing Bridge.

Eddie crosses his arms and frowns at Richie. "What's going on, Rich? I thought we were leaving?"

"We are, we are! I just want to show you something really quickly." Richie's shuffling back and forth, one arm rubbing the back of his neck.

Eddie just glares. "Ok, well, what is it?"

"So, huh, you know how I told you I'm gay, right?"

Eddie's face relaxes slightly. "Yeah."

"Well, as a kid, I had...I had this huge crush on someone. Although, to be honest, I didn't accept I had feeling feelings for them for the longest time." Richie is looking anywhere expect at Eddie's face.

"It wasn't until I had my own one-on-one confrontation with Pennywise that I fully accepted my feelings for them. Bowers had called me a fag, and I was in the park crying. And, then, that stupid Paul Bunyan statue came alive and attacked me. I managed to get away but I so *angry and upset*."

Richie's tearing up. "I hated them for pushing me around, using my feelings for someone as a way to frighten and scare me. Well *fuck them*, I thought. So, I came here and craved into the bridge. I wanted those fuckers to know they couldn't stop me from being me."

Richie jumps when he feels Eddie's hand land on his arm. Richie looks up to see a look of sadness in Eddie's eyes.

"I'm sorry, Rich."

"Thanks.", Richie laughs softly, "I guess I really wasn't so tough though. It took me another 27 years to fully come out of the closet."

Eddie's smiling softly at him. "It doesn't matter. Fuck 'um."

"Yeah, fuck 'um", Richie whispers.

“So, which one is yours?”, Eddie says looking down at the Kissing Bridge.

Richie can feel his heart start to race. This is it. Richie steps to the side and points. It’s still there after 27 years, a little faded, but it’s there - R + E. Richie keeps his eyes on Eddie’s face. Eddie’s face goes from curious, to confused, to astonished.

“Richie, is that-?”

“Yeah. It’s - it’s you. You, with your stupid inhaler and fanny pack. I teased you so much cause all I wanted was your attention. I lo-”, Richie gulps. He can’t get the words to come out of his mouth. They’re literally stuck in his throat.

Richie clears his throat. “I had like the biggest crush on you, man. I didn’t tell you as a kid, because, well you were my best friend...I didn’t want you to hate me. It would have *killed me*.” Richie takes off his glasses and wipes his wet eyes. “I’m still - I’m still afraid you’ll hate me.

“Richie.”

“I understand it if it’s weird now, me coming to New York with you. You can take the car and leave my pathetic ass here, but please, please don’t hate me.”

Richie’s glasses are pulled from his hand, and then they’re back on his face. Eddie’s hands linger next to Richie’s face for a brief moment and then they’re gone.

“I could never hate you, Rich.” Eddie says softly. “Thank you for telling me. It – it means a lot. It’s, uh, actually kind of flattering.” A blush creeps up Eddie’s face.

Richie laughs softly. “Well, don’t get an ego about it. I mean, you’re still a Loser.”

Eddie smiles and lightly pushes Richie. Richie shoves Eddie back. Then, Eddie is hugging him.

“Thanks, Rich. For everything.”, Eddie whispers into Richie’s

shoulder.

“Always, Eddie Spaghetti.” Richie savors every second of the hug.

Eddie huffs, pulls away, and starts to walk toward the car. “What do you say we stop by that diner outside of town? They might have something that won’t give me major heart burn.”

“Sure, sure.” Richie watches as Eddie gets back in the car. Before joining him, he turns back to his carving. He takes a quick picture of it on his phone, and silently apologizes to his thirteen-year-old self. Even after all of these years, he’s still scared to tell Eddie he’s in love with him.

Notes for the Chapter:

I'm sorry, everyone! They were so close! I promise they'll get together! Pinky promise!

7. Chapter Seven

It Was Always You

Chapter Seven

Eddie's POV

Eddie and Richie are heading South on I-95. They left Derry about a half hour ago. Good fucking riddance.

Richie is playing the stereo ridiculously loud and he's singing along to *Can't Stop This Feeling* while doing a bad Justin Timberlake impression. Eddie rolls his eyes and stares out the window, watching the multicolored fall trees pass by.

Eddie's heart is pounding in his chest. It's been like this since the Kissing Bridge, where Richie admitted that, as a kid, he had a crush on Eddie.

Eddie's ashamed to admit he's completely surprised by this revelation. All Richie ever did as a kid was tease Eddie – he ragged on his Ma, stole his inhaler, made fun of his fanny pack, etc. On top of that Richie had a million nicknames for Eddie – Eds, Eddie Spaghetti, sugah, toots, babe.

Ok, so maybe Eddie should have realized realized Richie had a crush on him. I mean, what thirteen-year-old boy calls their best friend *babe*?

Eddie always thought that was just Richie being Richie. I mean, he did that with everyone! Or did he? Richie never tried to steal a lick from Stan's ice cream cone. He never pinched Bill's cheeks and called him cute, cute, cute!

UH! God, how could Eddie be so fucking *stupid*?

But the thing is...Richie still acts that way towards him. Richie still calls Eddie all those stupid names, and god, just the other day Richie

called him cute. They haven't seen each other in 27 years but it's like no time has passed at all.

Is it possible that...Richie still have feelings for him?

Eddie thinks about how Richie barely left the hospital. He slept there every night. Richie would always fall asleep in a hospital chair while they were watching TV. Eddie just thought Richie was one of those people that could fall asleep anywhere. Although, what if Richie just pretended to fall asleep?

Eddie's heart swells at the thought. Did Richie actually pretend to fall asleep so he didn't have to explain why he wanted to sleep in a shitty hospital chair instead of going back to Mike's comfy couch? Holy fuck, maybe Richie still does have feelings for Eddie.

A blush starts to creep up Eddie's cheeks. He sneaks a look over at Richie who's dancing in his seat singing *24K Magic*.

"Put your pinky rings up to the MOON!", Richie sings.

Eddie snorts. Richie looks over at him as he sings along to the song.

"Come on, Eds. I know you love this song. Use what your mamma gave you!", Richie says bopping his head side to side and flailing his arm trying to dance while he keeps one hand on the steering wheel.

Eddie is full on laughing now. "Richie, stop, my stitches hurt.", he says as tears form in his eyes. He wants to scold Richie for only driving with one hand, but he can't bring himself to do it. Eddie's enjoying this too much. They continue to laugh as another song comes on the radio. Richie starts to sing along. Man, how many pop songs does Richie know?

Eddie's laughter dies down, but his heart is still beating rapidly, like it's trying to escape from his chest. Eddie's noticed his heart does this a lot when Richie's around. He feels it whenever Richie teases him, when he calls him Eds, or whenever Richie makes him laugh. God, he feels it whenever Richie's just *around*.

Eddies gasps softly. Richie doesn't hear him over the radio.

Oh fuck. Does...Does *he* have *feelings* for Richie?

Eddie remembers waking up from the coma and immediately wanting to see Richie. Sure, he wanted to see the other Losers too, but he wanted to see Richie first. And, when Richie came running into his hospital room Eddie's thought his heart would explode from happiness.

So, when exactly did he start to feel this way about Richie? Was it during the last two months?

Or was it...

As kids, they always managed to create their own little world, just the two of them. They would break away from the group to get ice cream. They would start bickering causing the others to walk ahead of them. They would lie in the hammock together reading comic books. Eddie remembers how he felt during all of those moments. His stomach would do a little flip when Richie's hand brushed against his as he handed Eddie his ice cream.

Eddie's heart would start to race when he bickered with Richie because it meant Richie was paying attention to him and only him. When Richie would start teasing Eddie, Eddie would always push back, because he knew Richie would push back harder, creating a never-ending loop of bickering.

And the hammock. Oh god, the hammock. Eddie would push his way into the hammock, entangling their limbs, which make his entire body feel like it was on fire.

Oh Jesus, oh fuck. Eddie's always had feelings for Richie. Holy fuck.

Eddie looks over at Richie, who is somehow still singing along to pop songs, and just stares. Richie notices him staring.

“What the fuck are you looking at, dickwad?”

It's pretty late when they pull off the freeway into a town called Worcester, just north of Boston. It's going to take them two days to get New York since they'd left the hospital so late in the afternoon. The streets are silent as they look for a hotel for the night.

They end up driving around for about half an hour because there is no way Eddie is going to stay in a hotel that is less than four stars, thank you very much. They find a hotel in the middle of downtown.

They leave their bags in the car as they go inside to check-in. They're greeted at the reception desk by a young man.

“Hello, how I can help you gentlemen?”

Richie leans against the desk. “Yeah, can we have-” He goes quiet and then looks over at Eddie. “Uhhh...”

Maybe they should have talked about their sleeping arrangements ahead of time.

Eddie jumps in, “Do you have a room with two queens?”

As the receptionist types into his computer Eddie whispers to Richie. “We might as well share a room. I need help with my bandages and we both need to save money.”

Richie just blinks rapidly, his mouth hanging open slightly. “Yeah, sure, good idea.”

“You’re in luck.”, the receptionist says, “We have a room on the top floor.”

They get their keys and then they grab their luggage from the car. Richie lugs Eddie's two large suitcases up to the room due Eddie's injuries. The room is nice. There's a television on a dresser facing the beds and there's a great view of downtown.

Richie jumps face first onto the bed closest to the door. “This one's mine!”

“They’re both the same, Richie.”

“You’re just jealous.” Richie flips over to stare at the ceiling, both of his hands behind his head.

Eddie shakes his head. “God, I’m definitely taking a shower. I haven’t had a normal shower in ages.”

“Whatever, I’m hitting the sack, man.” Richie looks like he’s not even going to get up to change, He’s just going to pass out right on the bed.

“Hey, no falling asleep yet! You need to help me get ready.” Eddie goes over to Richie and starts to tug on his leg. “Come on, get up, asshole.”

“Ugh, you’re so needy, Eds. Wait - what do you mean *get ready*?” Richie props himself up on his elbows.

“I can’t get my wounds wet in the shower. I need you to wrap them so they don’t get wet.”

“Wrap you!? What in the hell am I going to wrap you in? A fucking condom?”

Eddie face flashes red. He sputters, “Wha - what!? No, you fucking asshole, you need to wrap me in, like, saran wrap.”

“Saran wrap!? What the hell are you, some leftover meatloaf? Do you even have saran wrap? You know what, never mind, don’t answer that.”

As Richie’s ranting Eddie goes over to his luggage and pulls out a roll of saran wrap. He’s getting pretty tired and he just wants to go bed, and Richie is certainly not helping improve Eddie’s mood.

“Where in the hell did you even get that?”, Richie laughs.

“I got it from one of your lunch lady friends in the cafeteria, ok? This is probably only enough for tonight so we’re going to have to get some more tomorrow.”

“You can’t be serious.”

“Richie.” Eddie is done with this conversation. Eddie’s face is pinched in annoyance and he’s doing his trademark karate chop move with his hand. “Would you shut the fuck up for once and help me!?”

“Okay, okay. Jesus.” Richie stumbles out of bed.

Eddie huffs and starts to pull his shirt over his head. Eddie’s been shirtless a number of times in front of Richie, but this is the first time he’ll be shirtless in front of him after realizing he has feelings for Richie.

In the time it took for Eddie to take off his shirt Richie has gotten off the bed and is now standing face to face with him. If Eddie wanted to, he could rest his head on Richie’s shoulder. It’s a tempting thought.

Richie grabs the roll of saran wrap out of Eddie’s hands. He pulls it, creating that horrible ripping sound.

“Ok, one Eddie Spaghetti coming right up.”, Richie whispers. Eddie sees Richie’s cheeks look a little flushed.

“Ok.” Eddie whispers. Somehow this moment feels completely different from when Richie rewrapped his bandages in the hospital.

Richie places one end of the wrap on the side of Eddie’s chest. Richie’s hands are warm and soft against Eddie’s skin. Richie starts to circle Eddie pulling the saran wrap around and around his chest.

“Okay, you need to do it a little tighter so water won’t get in, but not too tight.” Eddie explains while trying to remember to breath.

“You know that really doesn’t make any sense.” Richie smiles as he tears the saran wrap off its roll and pats it against the small of Eddie’s back. “So how did I do, Doctor K?”

“Hmm, you actually didn’t do too bad. Good job, idiot.” Eddie smiles up at Richie who is still right up against him, they’re almost chest to chest. They stare at each other for a beat and then Richie pulls away.

“Yeah. Well, you’re welcome.” Richie throws the saran wrap into Eddie’s open luggage and plops back down on the bed. “You better not take a long ass shower, man. I want to be able at least get some sleep tonight.”

“Yeah, yeah. Don’t you dare fall asleep, asshole.” Eddie grabs a clean pair of boxers and his pajamas, and then heads into the bathroom.

Taking a hot shower after getting sponge baths feels heavenly. Eddie rests his head against the shower wall letting the water soak his hair and cascade down his body.

Eddie’s body is on fire and his breath is uneven. He’s reeling from what just happened. Feeling Richie’s hands run over his chest, feeling Richie brush up against his bare skin. God, he could even feel Richie’s breath against his neck at times.

Eddie’s never thought of himself as gay. Although, that isn’t fair a statement because Eddie’s never taken the time to actually *think* about his sexuality. Why would he? He grew up in an incredibly conservative town during the 80’s. A time when homosexuals were treated as complete outcasts. Eddie remembers as a kid how his Ma would wrinkle her nose and call their neighbors, Tony and Phil Tracker, “queers”.

Edie also recalls instances when he and his Ma would be out running errands, his Ma would lean down and whisper in his ear - ‘*Look at that pretty little girl over there, Eddie-Bear. Isn’t she so cute?*’ He would shyly peek at the girl, not really understanding why his Ma thought she was cute. He knew better than to question her about it though.

It was as if she was pushing him towards girls, telling him indirectly what she wanted for him. And Eddie, as always, ended up doing exactly what his Ma wanted. The older he got, the harder she pushed girls on him. She would invite her book club friends over to the house, and somehow one or two of them always managed to bring their daughters with them. Which is how Eddie had met Myra.

Thinking about Myra immediately starts to cool Eddie’s body down. God, he really doesn’t want to think about her right now.

Maybe it's time Eddie actually starts to explore his sexuality. Is he homosexual, bisexual, asexual? Okay, he's pretty sure he can cross that last one off the list based on how his body is reacting to Richie.

"Hey, asshole, you better not be jerking off in there!", Richie yells from the bedroom.

Eddie groans loudly in frustration. Eddie rushes through the rest of his shower, trying not to think about Richie splayed out on the bed.

Notes for the Chapter:

Sorry not sorry for the saran wrap scene. I couldn't help myself!

Also, I just want to say there are a lot of other sexualities, such as asexual, pansexual, demisexual, queer, etc. I just don't feel like Eddie would be educated enough in that area to know that. The poor baby.

8. Chapter Eight

It Was Always You

Chapter Eight

Richie's POV

Richie and Eddie have been in New York City for about a week. They're sharing a room, with two beds, at a Residence Inn in Brooklyn. It's nice but it's a little too nice for two people on a budget. They're going to have to start looking at other places soon because, honestly, they have no idea how long they're going to be in the city.

Richie is sitting outside at a coffee shop drinking his fifth cup of coffee. It's mid-November now so the leaves are shades of red and yellow. Richie's wearing a long sleeve t-shirt, a gray hoodie, and a jacket over top. Fall in New York is perfect for Richie's love of layering clothes.

It's been about a month and a half since Richie's ass got dumped by his manager, and today is the first day Richie had the balls to start calling managers to see if anyone was interested in working with him. So far, it doesn't seem like there are any takers.

He has tried not to think about his lack of unemployment too much. He wanted to give Eddie his full undivided attention and enjoy what little time they had left together. It's also fucking depressing to think about. He has no reason to go back to Los Angeles. Actually, in all honestly, he has no reason to go anywhere. Except for wherever Eddie is. He knows that he'll need to figure out his next career move soon though. He's pretty well off financially but it's not going to last forever.

At the moment Eddie is downtown meeting with his divorce lawyer strategizing about how to move forward with the divorce. Myra has gotten a divorce lawyer of her own, and it's not looking like she's going to make it easy. When they first arrived in the city Eddie tried

to go to his old house to get some of his stuff but Myra had changed the locks. The bitch.

Richie's waiting for Eddie to meet him at the coffee shop. While he tries not to stare at this phone he works on some new material. Nothing is coming out right though, the jokes aren't landing the way he wants them. He's completely frustrated. Maybe he should get another cup of coffee?

Before he can get up, he catches sight of Eddie on the other side of the street. Eddie's way of walking is very distinct so Richie can spot him a mile away. Richie waves at Eddie.

Eddie crosses the street and plops down across the table from Richie, and puts his head in his hands. He looks worn down and miserable.

"Hey, how'd it go?", Richie says.

Eddie lets out a big sigh. "Ugh, fine, I guess. We figured out what I'm willing to settle for in the divorce, but my lawyer doesn't think it's going to be easy. Myra's hired a big-time divorce lawyer so it's going to be fight."

Richie just hums in response. Richie really wants to reach across the table and take hold of Eddie's hand to comfort him but he holds back.

Eddie looks up at Richie. "How was your day?"

"Meh. Just sat here all day working on some new material. It's all shit though."

Eddie rolls his eyes as if he doesn't believe him. Eddie's eyes the number of empty coffee cups that are strewn across the table. "God, Rich, how many cups of coffee have you had?"

"Hey, hey, leave me creative juice alone."

Eddie snorts. "Your creative juice?"

"Yeah, it helps the jokes flow more smoothly."

"I'm pretty sure it means you're going to crash really hard tonight

and I'm going to be left listening to your god awful snoring.”

Richie notices Eddie is starting to perk up a little bit from their banter back and forth. Richie smiles. He's ready to fully commit to this bitch fest; anything to make Eddie feel better.

“Oh, as if you don't snore too, asshole.”

“Not like you do! God, I had to buy fucking earplugs just so I can get some sleep.”

“Says the guy who gets up at the crack of dawn. Could you be any louder in the morning?”

“It's a single room, Rich. I'm sorry if the fucking coffee machine is too loud for your sensitive ass.” Eddie is full on smiling now. Mission accomplished.

“Yeah, yeah, yeah.” Richie mumbles, letting the fight die off. “Hey, what do for wanna do for food tonight? I'm fucking starving.” While Richie's had five cups of coffee, he somehow managed not to eat all day.

Eddie shrugs. “I don't know. I'm not too hungry to be honest. I'm really nervous about tomorrow. We're meeting Myra and her lawyer for the first time. I haven't...I haven't seen her since I told her I wanted a divorce.” Eddie's face has morphed back. He frowns as he slumps down in his chair.

Richie could kill that woman. He tries to think of some way to cheer Eddie up, a way to distract him from the shitstorm that's going to be tomorrow.

“Hey, I have an idea! Why don't we go to a good ol' New York deli and then go see a movie?” Richie's eyes get wide with excitement. As kids, Richie and Eddie loved going to the movies. Richie especially loved it when it was just the two of them.

Eddie doesn't look as convinced. “Richie, we're both living on a budget. We can't just go throwing our money all over the city.”

“Oh my god, Eds.” Richie throws his head back, exasperated. “We're

going to go get a quick bit to eat and then see a movie. It's not like we're going to fucking Sardis and then go see a Broadway show."

"Psst, it's not like they would even let you into Sardis. Especially not with that shirt." Eddie chuckles as a smile starts to tug at his lips.

"Fuck you, man. This is one of my favorite shirts. Now, what movie do we want to see?" Richie pulls out his phone.

"Oh! What about Doctor Strange? It's supposed to be fucking amazing." Eddie's eyes are shining now. He's excited.

"God, you're such a fucking nerd.", Richie laughs. For the record, Richie loves that Eddie's a nerd, it's one of things he loves most about Eddie as a matter of fact.

"Fuck you. You're a nerd too." Eddie stands up. "Come on, I think I saw a deli on my way here."

Richie gets up and they start to walk down the street together. It takes all of Richie's will power not to reach over and grab Eddie's hand. He tries not to think about how dinner and a movie is what couples do together.

They find a hole-in-the-wall deli, which means it must be good. The menu is the size of a small novella, but they both end up getting pastrami on rye with pickles on the side.

"So, did you call any managers today?" Eddie asks as he takes a big bite out of his sandwich. The meat is piled so high he has to stretch his mouth open just to take a bite. Richie tries not to stare.

Richie just hums as his mouth is currently filled with pastrami. He swallows. "Yeah, but I don't think any of them will call me back. Hollywood is full of pricks."

“You don’t know that. You’re pretty popular. You know, for a stand-up comedian. You’re not like A-List or anything though.”

“Wow, thanks, Eds. You’re filling me with confidence here.” Richie says dryly.

Richie reaches over and steals one of Eddie’s pickles. Richie hasn’t even touched either of the pickles that are on his plate. Eddie kicks him in the shin.

“Jesus, Eds.”, Richie hisses. Eddie just smirks.

“I’m being serious though.” Eddie says. “I think someone will call you back. It might just take time for word to get around you’re available.”

Richie sighs. He really doesn’t want to talk about this right now. “It’s just that, word travels so fast in Hollywood. If I haven’t gotten a call by now, chances are I won’t ever. I’ll have to really start thinking about starting out on my own again, which fucking sucked by the way. I might as well see if this place has any job openings.”

“I’m sorry, Rich. I didn’t know you were so upset about it.”

“Yeah, well, I just feel like I’ve wasted my whole life being someone I’m not.” Richie’s lost his appetite at this point.

“Yeah, I know what you mean.” Eddie’s abandoned his sandwich too. “You know, I’m actually jealous that you know what you want. I don’t have a fucking clue.”

Richie looks over at Eddie confused. “Excuse me? Did you just say that you’re jealous? You’re jealous of my dumb ass?”

“Yeah, I’m jealous, okay?”, Eddie says defensively. “You know exactly what you want and you’re doing what you can to make it happen.”

“What are you talking about? I don’t know shit!” Richie’s so confused.

“Yes, you do! You know you want to continue being a stand-up comedian. You’re working on new material and you’re calling

managers. God, Rich! You know exactly what you want out of life!” Eddie is really worked up now. “God, you even *know* that you’re gay!”

Richie’s mind goes blank for a second. What did Eddie just say?

“I’m sorry. Did you just say ‘at least I *know* that I’m gay’? Are you...?”

Eddie’s face is bright red. Richie’s never seen it so red. He thinks Eddie didn’t mean to say that last bit out loud.

“I don’t know, okay! I have no fucking clue.” Eddie’s gripping the end of the table, turning his knuckles white. “I’ve never allowed myself to think about it. You know, with my Ma and Myra suffocating me, I didn’t really have the freedom to do that.”

“It’s okay, Eds. Really.” Richie reaches across the table and grabs one of Eddie’s hand trying to release his death grip.

“I mean, maybe I’m bi? Or maybe I’m straight, but I just wasn’t into Myra or something? I also know that there are other sexualities, but I’m not too familiar with them. Maybe I should do some research...” Eddie continues to rant, talking more and more to himself as he goes.

“Eds-” Richie’s tries to get Eddie’s attention, but Eddie’s completely absorbed. He looks like he’s talking to the one remaining pickle that’s left on his plate.

Richie finally leans across the table and grabs Eddie by his cheek. “Hey! Look at me, Eddie!”

Eddie’s mouth snaps shut. He looks straight into Richie’s eyes.

“Hey, it’s okay Eddie.”, Richie says calmly. “It’s okay not to know. You know that, right?”

Eddie nods dumbly.

“The good news is, is that you’re free now, and you have all the time in the world to think about it. There’s no need to rush it, Eds.” Richie strokes Eddie’s cheek.

Eddie smiles. He reaches up and grabs onto Richie's hand and presses it against his face. "Thanks, Rich."

They both let go at the same time, both of their hands falling to their sides. An awkward beat passes.

"So, can I have your other pickle?", Richie asks.

"Jesus fucking Christ."

It's the next day and Richie is back at the coffee shop. He's only on his third cup of coffee though so that's progress.

He's trying to think of something fun him and Eddie can do tonight, so he can distract Eddie from his divorce. Last night, after the deli, they went to the movies. Richie threw popcorn at Eddie during all the trailers. He only stopped when Eddie threatened to leave unless Richie 'grew the fuck up'. Richie ended up missing most of the movie. He was too busy sneaking glances at Eddie. He loved seeing Eddie's face light up and, god, he loved listening to Eddie's laugh.

Richie feels his phone vibrate in his pocket. He thinks it might be the Losers' group chat. He's wrong, though. It's a number he's not familiar with, but it's an 818 number which means it's from Los Angeles. He picks it up.

"Hello?"

"Richie Tozier?"

"Yes. Who is this?" Richie is mildly suspicious at this point.

"Richie! Hi, my name is Liam Maxwell. I work for CAA as a manager. I'm calling because I hear you're no longer working with your former manager."

“Uhhhhh.” Richie can’t manage much more of a response. He stopped listening when he heard the name CAA. This can’t be happening right now! CAA! They’re like one of the most well-known companies out there!

“Are you there, Rich?”

Richie shakes his head and finds his voice again. “Yeah, yeah. Sorry. You’re right. I’m no longer working with my previous manager.”

“Huh, I’ll be honest I’m a little surprised to hear that. You’re big shit at the moment.”

“Yeah, well, I’ve had to take a break for a little bit. Some life maintenance things I got to take care of.”

“Yeah, of course. You gotta take care of stuff like that.”

Richie has no idea what rumors are flying around in the industry about him, especially after he literally ditched his tour and disappeared, but Liam sounds like he doesn’t care.

“Well, hey, Richie, since it’s true you’re up for grabs I would love to meet with you. I think you’re one of the best comedians of our time. It would be an absolute pleasure to work with you.”

Richie cannot believe this is actually happening right now. He had basically given up hope.

“Yeah, yeah! That would be awesome!” Richie tries to play it cool but it doesn’t work.

“Awesome! Well, I’ll have my assistant schedule a time for you to come in.” Liam sounds almost as excited as Richie.

It then occurs to Richie that Liam is in Los Angeles and Richie’s dumb ass in New York City.

“Hey, sorry, I forgot to mention I’m currently in New York City.” Richie cringes, thinking he’s just blown his chance.

“Oh, well, do you think you can come out to Los Angeles next week?”

I'm about to leave on vacation soon."

Fuck. God damnit. Richie can't miss this opportunity.

"Yeah, sure." Richie says through gritted teeth. Fuck.

"Awesome!" Liam sounds like he's about to hang up the phone.

"Hey, Liam, one more thing." Richie doesn't know if this is a mistake or not, but if he's going to do this, he's going to do it his way. "I just wanted to let you know that I really want to start moving my career in a different direction.

"Oh? How so?" Liam sounds curious but weary.

Richie swallows dryly. "Well, I'll be honest, I had ghost writers before, but I really want to start doing my own material. It's different than what they had me doing before but I promise you it's still good shit."

He really doesn't want to get into the whole '*oh yeah, I'm gay and I want to do my own queer themed material*' over the phone. He'll save that for his meeting.

"Oh! Well, I would love to talk to you about that. Do you have some material you could bring?"

"Yeah, absolutely."

"Perfect! I'll see you next week, Rich." Liam hangs up.

Richie stares at his phone not quite believing what just happened.

Fuck. What is he going to tell Eddie?

Notes for the Chapter:

Hope everyone enjoyed the latest two chapters! I'll publish the next two chapters next weekend, and then the last two chapters I'll publish early on November 28th (Thanksgiving in the US).

9. Chapter Nine

It Was Always You

Chapter Nine

Eddie's POV

Eddie's meeting with Myra and her lawyer did not go well. He didn't expect it to honestly, but he's completely worn out now. Myra kept giving Eddie her trademark puppy dog eyes while her lawyer played hard ball. Eddie knows what Myra's doing – she's going to make this as difficult as possible in hopes he will just roll over and come back. Eddie's not stupid, he knows her techniques, he's been playing this game his whole life.

Eddie's just gotten off the subway and is now walking toward the coffee shop where he's meeting up with Richie. God, he hates subways. They're so dirty and people have no sense of personal space. He needs to save money though so he can't splurge on taxis.

He sees Richie's sitting at the same table as yesterday. There're only a couple cups of coffee scattered across the table though. God, how does Richie manage to drink so much coffee? Eddie makes a mental note not allow Richie to drink anymore caffeine at dinner.

Eddie sits down at the table. "Hi."

"Hey." Richie looks really wired, like he's full of electricity. His eyes are wide and he's twitching in his chair. Eddie knows something's up immediately, and it has nothing to do with the copious amounts of caffeine Richie's been drinking.

"Hey, I got you a cup." Richie pushes a steaming paper cup toward Eddie.

"Thanks." Eddie takes a drink. It's his favorite, a green tea latte with soy milk. Richie actually remembered his favorite drink. Eddie blushes at the thought. "So, what's up? You look like you're about to

burst at the seams.”

“Who? Me?” Richie looks surprised.

“Yes, you dufus. Just tell me before you combust.”

“I got a call from manager in Los Angeles!”, Richie blurts out.

“No way! Are you serious, Rich! That’s amazing!” Eddie knew it was only a matter of time before Richie’s luck started to turn around.

“Yeah, yeah, it’s amazing.” Richie’s rubbing his neck as if he’s nervous. “He heard I was available and he wants to meet with me.”

“Shit, Rich. That’s great. When are you meeting with him?”

“In three days, on Monday. But - uh - I need to meet him in Los Angeles so I’m going to be gone for a couple days. I - uh - hope that’s okay.” Richie’s face scrunches in, as if he’s preparing for Eddie to yell at him.

It didn’t occur to Eddie that Richie would have to go to Los Angeles for his meeting. It makes complete sense though; Richie’s life is in back in L.A. after all. Eddie’s heart squeezes in pain, as if a vise is slowly being tightened around it. It’s been amazing to come back to Richie after a complete shit day, and Richie’s been a big help with taking care of Eddie’s wounds.

“Yeah, of course. You’ll knock it out of the park.” Eddie doesn’t want to ask but it’s on the tip of his tongue. *Are you going to come back?*

“Thanks, man. You’ll be okay for a couple of days, right? I hate to do this when you’re just starting the divorce process and I know you’re still having trouble wrapping your wounds.” Richie’s hand is twitching on the table as if he wants to grab Eddie’s hand. Eddie wishes he would.

“Yeah, I’ll be fine. You can’t miss this opportunity.” The last thing Eddie wants is to hold Richie back. He wants him to be happy.

“Thanks, Eds. I’m going to leave tomorrow but I should be back in a couple days. Even if it goes well, I still need to write more material

and I can do that anywhere.” Richie smiles at him.

The vise around Eddie’s heart loosens; Richie’s planning on coming back. Thank god. He doesn’t know if he’d be able to get through everything without Richie by his side.

“Well, knock ‘em dead, Trashmouth.”

It’s Saturday. Richie left that morning to fly back to Los Angeles so Eddie has nothing but time on his hands. Richie has been constantly texting Eddie updates since he’s been gone.

Arrived at the airport. God, I forgot how much I hate this fucking airport.

Got through security. I somehow managed not to get stripped searched.

Boarded now. The seat next to me is empty. Score!

Taking off soon. I’ll text you on the other side. You know, so you don’t think my plane exploded mid-flight or something.

Eddie loves getting texts like this because it means that Richie’s thinking about him. Eddie texts Richie back throughout this day, just light banter and giving general updates on what he’s doing.

At this point, Eddie’s fairly certain Richie still has feelings for him. When Richie’s rewrapping his bandages, he can feel Richie tense up next to him as if he’s nervous. Eddie has also noticed that Richie is very touchy; it seems like Richie finds any opportunity he can to touch Eddie. He’ll bump into Eddie when they’re walking through a doorway together. His hand will linger a second too long on Eddie’s shoulder. Eddie has also noticed Richie’s fondness for holding his face.

There was also the other night when they went to the deli and then saw a movie together. It really felt like a date. Richie annoyed him during all of the trailers, as if what was on the screen wasn't as interesting as Eddie. Eddie also noticed the way Richie stared at him throughout the entire movie. It took everything in his power not just grab Richie's face and kiss him. Eddie had so much fun that night, more than he ever had during his 10+ year marriage with Myra. He's hopes Richie wants to do it again.

At the same time, Eddie also wants to punch himself in the face for that night. He didn't mean to get so worked up over this sexuality or, more accurately, his lack of a sexual identity. It's just something that's been really gnawing away at him. What forty-year-old man doesn't know his own sexuality!?

Apparently, Eddie. Thankfully, Richie was there to calm him down. Richie's right – It's okay not to know. Eddie has time to figure it out, which is exactly what Eddie's planning to do over the next couple of days. He realizes that a couple of days isn't enough to fully explore his sexuality but he has to start somewhere, right? It will also be much easier to do without some lanky idiot distracting him.

It seems like an overwhelming task, but he thinks the best place to start is with what he already knows:

1. He's not attracted to Myra. This doesn't mean that Eddie isn't attracted to women though.
2. He is attracted to Richie and therefore men.
3. He is not asexual. See point #2.

Okay, that's a good start. So, Eddie isn't straight but he doesn't know if he's homosexual, bisexual, etc. So how does he go about figuring this out? How does he figure out who he's sexually attracted to?

Eddie sighs loudly but only the hotel walls hear him. He stands up from the bed and grabs his jacket and laptop. Sitting and staring at the hotel walls isn't going to help. He might as well go outside and get a little bit of fresh air.

Eddie walks a couple of blocks and finds himself at Richie's favorite café, the one they keep meeting at in the evenings. Of course, Eddie

walked here. Richie's only been gone for a couple of hours and Eddie already misses him. Pathetic.

Eddie buys a green tea latte with soy milk, sits down at Richie's table outside, and boots up his laptop. He's contemplating signing up for a dating app. He doesn't want to find a date; he just prefers this over sitting on a park bench blatantly staring at people as they walk by. He'd probably get the police called on him.

There are so many dating apps, it's overwhelming – Match, Tinder, Coffee Meets Bagel, Bumble, okcupid, eHarmony. Jesus, he's way too old for this shit. He goes with eHarmony because it seems like it's targeted at people his age. When it asks him what his gender preferences are, he leaves it completely blank so it can cast the widest net.

He spends most the day reading people's profiles and clicking through their pictures. He very quickly realizes there are some things he absolutely does not find attractive: smokers, smarmy looking guys posed in front of their sport cars, and guys that are built like body builders.

Eddie notices that for the most part he's been clicking on a lot of men's profiles. So far, he hasn't found women, or people who are more androgynous, attractive. Okay, he's getting somewhere now.

He starts to dive more into men's profiles, specifically gay men's profiles. A lot of the profiles have names in them - twink, otter, bear - none of which mean anything to Eddie. God, he's going to have to do some research later.

He phones beeps. It's his text message alert. His heart surges. He's hopes it's Richie.

Landed! I can't tell which airport I hate more – LAX or JFK??

Eddie smiles and texts back.

Definitely JFK. It's like the devil's armpit of New York City.

Man, have you even been to LAX? It's like the devil's asshole.

Eddie laughs. He closes his computer and continues to text with Richie.

It's Monday and Eddie's sitting in another divorce meeting. Eddie's not listening to the conversation though as he's texting with Richie, who's about to go into his meeting.

Eddie can tell Richie's nervous, even just by reading his texts. Richie's told Eddie he's going to demand he does his own material from now on or there's no deal. Eddie couldn't be prouder of him.

Okay! Going into my meeting! Wish me luck!

Break a leg, dufus!

Eddie sighs internally. Now that Richie's in his meeting Eddie has nothing to distract him from whatever bullshit Myra's lawyer is talking about. Eddie thinks about what he's going to do this evening which is probably the same thing he did all weekend.

Through Saturday and Sunday, Eddie continued checking out dating profiles and even started to do some research. Eddie's even moved on to checking out men he meets while running errands. He tries not to be too obvious about it, but he doesn't think he's succeeding. When he grabbed a green tea latte this morning at his and Richie's coffee shop, he sneakily checked out the tall, lanky, dark-haired barista behind the counter. The barista winked at him when he gave Eddie his latte. Eddie nearly died of embarrassment.

At this point, he's 90% certain he's homosexual.

Eddie's been dying to tell Richie, but it's not something you say over the phone or through text. *Hey! Guess what? I finally figured out I'm gay!* Eddie won't have to wait long though. Richie's scheduled to return to New York City tomorrow.

A couple of hours must have passed because the meeting's now over. Eddie escapes out of the room before Myra can so much as get a word out of her mouth. Just as Eddie exits the building his phone starts to ring. It's Richie.

"Hey, Rich, how'd it go?", Eddie smiles into the phone.

"EDDIE! Oh my god, Eddie! You won't believe it! They offered me a deal! Can you believe that shit!?", Richie yells into the phone.

"No, shit! You showed them your material and everything?"

"Yeah, yeah!" Eddie can imagine Richie bobbing his head up and down. "I did all of it for them. They were a little confused at first, you know, because of my old stuff, but they really liked it! They even said they like my stuff way better than that old shit!"

"That's fantastic. Congrats, Rich!", Eddie beams with pride.

"Yeah, thanks." Richie gets quiet. "Hey, listen, they want me to stay in town for a couple of days to finalize my contract. So, uh...I won't be able to come back for a tomorrow."

"oh." Eddie feels the air go out of his chest. He didn't see this coming.

"Hey, hey! If you need me to come back I will! I can always tell them-", Richie starts rambling.

"No, no! You have to stay there and see this through. I can manage on my own for a few more days." Eddie doesn't want Richie to lose this opportunity because of his dumb, wounded ass.

"Ok, thanks, Eds." Eddie can practically hear Richie smiling.

They talk a bit longer about how Eddie's divorce is going, what's it like in Los Angeles, etc. When Eddie hangs up, he's practically crying. He didn't realize how much he was looking forward to having Richie back.

God, if Richie's signing with a manager in Los Angeles, Richie will have to go back there sooner or later. Eddie doesn't want Richie to

leave but why would Richie stay with Eddie? Sure, Richie's helping Eddie through the divorce and with his injuries, but at some point, both of those things will be over and done with. Richie will move on and Eddie will be...Eddie will be left all by himself.

Eddie's heart clenches at the thought. He doesn't want to be separated from Richie. He wants to continue sharing his mornings, days, and evenings with him. He wants to share everything with Richie – from going to store to buy milk to going on dates with him.

Holy fuck. Shit. Eddie wants to be in a *relationship* with Richie.

Jesus Christ. Eddie didn't realize it before but he wants it so badly. He wants to hold his hand, cuddle with him on the couch, kiss him, share a bed with him. Oh, sweet fucking Jesus. What the fuck is he going to do?

Notes for the Chapter:

So I just want to address Eddie's exploration of his sexuality. Needless to say someone's sexuality is a BIG, complicated thing. I realize it would take someone a lot longer to full understand and explore their sexuality, but to be honest, I really needed to move Eddie's development along. He also seems like the type of person that would do it in the most discrete way possible, hence the dating apps. Also, it's just funny to think of Eddie looking at dating profiles.

10. Chapter Ten

It Was Always You

Chapter Ten

Richie's POV

It's the morning of Richie's big meeting with Liam at CAA. Richie actually puts some effort into getting ready. He combs his hair, trying to tame his wild curls. He even puts on a nice, not overly garish, button-up shirt, slacks, and a jacket. He imagines Eddie would be proud of him for his efforts.

When he arrives at CAA Richie's already sweating bullets. His previously slicked back hair is becoming a wild curly mess, and he can feel his nice shirt getting stained underneath his armpits. Fuck, that means he won't be able to take off his jacket during the meeting.

Richie's texting with Eddie, who at the moment is bored out of his mind sitting in one of his overly long divorce meetings. Richie loves that him and Eddie have been texting almost non-stop since he left New York. It makes him feel like Eddie actually misses having him around. It's also helping Richie keep his cool while he waits for his meeting to start.

"Mr. Tozier, Liam will see you now.", the assistant behind the desks says.

Richie gulps. "Okay, great."

Before he gets up, he sends a message to Eddie.

Okay! Going into my meeting! Wish me luck!

Break a leg, dufus!

Richie grins. It gives him the confidence he needs.

Richie's out of his meeting. He'd just gotten off the phone with Eddie telling him the good news. He actually landed a fucking deal!

He was convinced that they were going to laugh him out of the building, but the meeting went the exact opposite of what Richie expected. Richie ended up meeting with Liam and a Senior Vice President of the company.

When he told them he was gay they didn't believe him at first. *Are you joking, there's no way Richie 'Trashmouth' Tozier is gay? You're so well known for your raunchy material.* It took a minute but he convinced them that it wasn't a joke and yes, he is gay, thank you very much.

He had to explain that when he got his first big break in the early 2000's acceptance of LGBTQIA community wasn't what it is today. He doesn't tell them that his last manager was the biggest homophobic asshole in all of Hollywood. Instead he tells them he was, initially, really afraid of losing everything if he came out. Of course, times have changed and Richie has changed. He doesn't want to live a lie anymore; he wants to be himself and fuck anyone who doesn't like him for it.

Richie felt vulnerable the whole time he was telling his story. He's just met these people and he's basically giving them his whole life story (minus the clown).

Instead of laughing in his face they tell him how inspiring his story is and how they would love to hear some of his material. Huh, Richie doesn't think of his life as inspirational, more like a fucking disaster, but he was relieved they were willing to listen to his new material.

He performed everything he'd written so far and by the time he was done they were clutching their stomachs and they had tears in their eyes from laughing. He knew he nailed it. Thank fuck.

They offered him a deal right on the spot. It's not as good as what he had with his last manager, but fuck it, he'll get to do his own material now.

They asked him to stay in the city for a few more days so they can finalize the contract. Richie's heart lurched at the thought of leaving Eddie alone for a few more days but he has to do this. He promised himself once the contract is done, he'll be on the next flight back to New York.

It's Saturday night, a week since Richie left for Los Angeles, and Richie's boarding a plane that's heading to New York City. He's taking a redeye flight out, the last of the night.

Richie closed the contract yesterday. It was miracle it happened so fast but he's done being away from Eddie. He told his manager, Liam, he doesn't know how much longer he's going to be New York City, but he'll continue to work on new material while he's there. Thankfully, Liam completely understands the situation. Richie and Liam schedule a weekly call for them to review Richie's new material and to strategize the best way to 'come out'.

Richie gets a beer on the plane, reclines in his seat, and watches as Los Angeles gets smaller and smaller as plane flies eastward. Richie's so excited to be going back to Eddie, but he's also nervous at the same time.

He's been debating whether or not he should tell Eddie his true feelings. He just doesn't think he's brave enough to do it. The last time he tried, at the Kissing Bridge, he completely fucked it up. He can't believe he said that he used to have a fucking *crush* on Eddie as a kid. It's true but it not the complete truth. He fell in love with Eddie as a kid, and he's still in love with him.

If Richie tells Eddie, he's terrified he'll lose him for good. It's one

thing to say he used to have crush, it's another thing to say he's still completely in love with him. The last thing Richie wants is to lose Eddie after just getting him back. He'll settle for just being Eddie's best friend. He'll do it just so he can be by Eddie's side.

There's also the fact that at some point Eddie's divorce is going to be finalized and Eddie will no longer need Richie to help him with his injuries. Richie has no idea what he's going to do then. He'll have no plausible excuse for staying with Eddie anymore.

Richie's been debating asking if Eddie wants to come to Los Angeles with him. You know, as roommates! Pretty soon Eddie won't have anything keeping him in New York City and he might enjoy the slow pace of warm Southern California. Is it weird to ask his forty-year-old best friend to move in with him?

Eddie is a grown man after all. Once he's healed, he'll probably go back to work. Maybe Eddie will want to get his own place in Los Angeles instead of dealing with Richie's messy ass. At least that way Richie would be able to see Eddie on a regular basis instead of Eddie being all the way on the other side of the country.

Richie sighs loudly. He rests his head against the window and he slowly drifts to off sleep as he thinks about how he's going to see Eddie in a few short hours.

Notes for the Chapter:

Thank you to everyone that have left kudos, comments, and bookmarked this work! It means the world to me!

I'm sorry this last chapter is a little short, but the next two chapters will definitely make up for it. *evil grin* I'm going to be posting the last two chapters early on November 28th (Thanksgiving in the US).

I'm also going to be turning this into a series. I already have four, yes FOUR, sequels planned. So please subscribe to the series or to me as an author if

you would like to get updates.

Thank you again!

11. Chapter Eleven

It Was Always You

Chapter Eleven

Eddie's POV

Eddie's at JFK waiting for Richie's flight to land. It's very early Sunday morning so it's not an absolute nightmare at the airport yet. Richie took a redeye flight out of Los Angeles which is why Eddie's there at the crack of dawn. There's a large group of people coming out of the terminal and into baggage claim; the first plane of the day must have landed. Eddie looks around trying to catch sight of Richie.

Then, Eddie sees him. Richie looks like a complete disaster. His hair is standing up all over the place, his shirt is rumpled, and he has bags under his eyes.

"Hey, Eddie Spaghetti!", Richie says sleepily as he gives Eddie a one arm hug, trying to avoid Eddie's stitches. Richie's other arm is holding his duffle bag. God, does Richie even own more than one pair of jeans?

Eddie lightly hugs Richie. Richie's aroma quickly surrounds Eddie. There's an undercurrent of sweat but other than that it's pure Richie. Richie's smell is warm - like clover and cinnamon. God, Eddie wants to press his nose right into base of Richie's neck.

He pulls back. "Don't call me that." Eddie's grinning though so he's not fooling Richie.

Richie grins right back at him. "What do you say we leave this hellhole?"

"Sure, we can grab a taxi just outside."

"A taxi? Oh, you don't need to splurge on a taxi for little ol' me, Eds!"

“Shut up. You must be tired. Did you get any sleep? You look fucking awful.”

They go outside and Eddie hails a taxi. One pulls up immediately and they get in.

“Fuck you. I tried to get some sleep on the plane, but there was this obnoxious kid sitting behind me. He kept kicking my chair. Man, I tell you, I wish IT was still around so I could introduce that kid to him.”

“Richie!” Eddie smacks Richie’s arm lightly.

“Yeah, yeah. I know. I don’t really mean that.” Richie waves Eddie off and leans against the taxi window closing his eyes. “Maybe he’ll just get hit by a car or something”, Richie mumbles.

Richie falls asleep but they quickly arrive at the hotel. Richie stumbles out of the taxi completely forgetting his duffel bag at his feet. Eddie pays the driver, grabs Richie’s duffel back, and follows Richie into the hotel.

When they get to their room Richie toes off his shoes and falls face first onto his bed. He’s asleep in less than a minute.

Eddie quietly opens the closet door to place his and Richie’s shoes inside. He leaves Richie’s duffel bag at the foot of Richie’s bed, and then he slowly sits down on his bed and just stares at Richie.

Richie’s sleeping on his stomach with his face tilted toward Eddie. His mouth is slightly open and his glasses are twisted on his face. Eddie reaches over and takes them off Richie’s face. He traces the slope of Richie’s nose with his finger before he sits back down. He holds Richie’s glasses in his hands, not willing to put them down on the nightstand.

Over the last few days Eddie has been thinking non-stop about how he’s going to tell Richie, well, everything. He wants to tell Richie that he’s figured out he’s gay, that he has feelings for Richie, and that he doesn’t want Richie to leave him and go back to Los Angeles. He wants to be with Richie.

Eddie had the whole thing planned out, every step.

Step #1: Take Richie out to brunch after picking him up from the airport.

Step #2: After brunch, ask Richie if he wanted to take a walk through a park.

Step #3: During their walk, ask if they could sit on a bench together. (Hopefully it's one that had a nice romantic view, like a lake or something.)

Step #4: Lean over and kiss Richie. (He wants to be sitting when he kisses Richie for the first time, because he thinks his knees might buckle and then he'll just fall on his ass.)

Eddie doesn't know how else to do it, expect to just kiss Richie. Eddie and Richie are not very good at verbal communication; they've always communicated with each other through actions instead of words.

Eddie's going to have to rethink his plan though since Richie has completely passed out. He wants it to be a special moment and he wants to do it in a slightly private place - you know, in case it goes south.

He continues to play with Richie's glasses as he watches Richie sleep.

It's early in the afternoon when Richie starts to show signs of life.

"Uggg.", Richie moans as he rubs his eyes.

Eddie watches as Richie stretches his arms above his head. Richie's shirt hikes up a little bit giving Eddie a view of Richie's lower abdomen. Eddie takes a quick peek, and then moves to put Richie's glasses down on the nightstand. Eddie repositions himself on his bed

so it looks like he's been reading a book on his bed while Richie napped.

"Hey, sleepy-head.", Eddie says.

Richie sits up on the edge of his bed, facing towards Eddie. "Hey, man, I just had the best nap of my life." Richie's blinking rapidly at Eddie. Richie doesn't realize he doesn't have his glasses on.

"Yeah, I know, dufus. I forgot how loud you snore." Eddie reaches over, grabs Richie's glasses, and shoves them on Richie's face. "There. You fell asleep with them on. You need to be more careful with them, you know." Eddie tries to sound annoyed but it comes out tender.

"Yeah, yeah. Whatever, Dr. K.", Richie yawns.

Suddenly the room is filled with a large rumbling noise.

"What the fuck?" Eddie stares at Richie, who is the source of the noise.

Richie laughs. "Sorry, sorry! I. Am. Starving. I haven't eaten since yesterday afternoon. I got to the airport late so I didn't have a chance to grab something to eat."

"Oh, well, why don't we go get lunch? I found this great Italian place while you were gone." Eddie's getting excited. Now he can get his plan back on track!

"Nah, you know what I feel like!?" Richie seems to have finally gotten some life back into him. "I feel like a great big, greasy New York City hot dog!"

"WHAT!?"

"Yeah, a great big, greasy hot dog just slathered in relish and mustard, and then just covered in a mountain of onions."

"You can't be serious." Eddie feels his stomach drop.

"Yeah, come on, man. I've been away for, like, a week. I'm dying for one." Richie jumps out of bed and heads for the door.

Before Eddie knows it, they're on the street and at a hot dog stand a few blocks from their hotel. Eddie absolutely refuses to get a hot dog. No fucking way. Instead he gets a salad from a take-out place nearby.

They're both sitting at a table outside eating their respected lunches. Richie's hot dog is dripping with relish and Richie has mustard staining the sides of his lips. Eddie has no idea how he finds this both attractive and repulsive at the same time.

"You know, Rich, you really shouldn't be eating that. Those stands are filled with bacteria.", Eddie says as he picks at his salad, distracted by the mustard around Richie's lips.

Richie hums and just waves him off.

Eddie's debating whether or not to ask Richie if he wants to go walk through the park after lunch. Maybe he can find a good spot for them to sit down and then he can lean in toward Richie and - on the other hand maybe he doesn't want their first kiss to taste like a disgusting hot dog. No! No! He doesn't want to push this off!

"Hey, Rich-"

"Hey, can we stop by the convenience store on the way back to the hotel? I forgot like nearly everything back in L.A." Richie's done with his hot dog and he's now licking his fingers which are covered in mustard.

Eddie groans. "Are you fucking serious? Did you forget your toothbrush or something?"

"Yeah, I forgot my toothbrush, but I also forgot, like - my toothpaste, floss, deodorant.", Richie says sheepishly.

"Oh my god, Richie, that's like everything! What the hell did you even have in your duffel bag if you forgot all that shit?"

Richie grins. "What do you think, dufus? It's just chock full of condoms for when I get together with your mom later!" Wow, Eddie really walked right into that one.

"Shut the fuck up!", Eddie yells. God, how is he attracted to such an

annoying idiot? “Fine. Fine. Fuck it. Let’s just go.” Eddie’s gets up from the table and starts to walk down the street before Richie can respond. He knows he’s being a little bit dramatic but he doesn’t fucking care.

Richie catches up to him and walks besides Eddie. “Sorry, Eds. I know I haven’t been very fun today. You probably wanted to do something fun instead of watching my ass sleep the day away and then go to a convenience store. It’s one of the few days you aren’t stuck in a boring meeting.”

Eddie glances over at Richie, who looks a little guilty.

“No, no, it’s fine.” Eddie tries to release some of the tension he’s holding in his body. They fall into an awkward silence for a few blocks.

“You know, it’s doesn’t always have to be fun and games, right?”, Eddie says suddenly. They’ve somehow ended up right next to a public park. Close enough, right?

“Huh?” Richie gives Eddie a perplexed look.

“I mean...” Eddie stops walking. He turns toward Richie, but he can’t manage to look at him. Eddie just ends up staring at his shoes.

“You don’t have to worry about entertaining me. I mean, I like when we do fun stuff together, but...like...” Eddie can feel a blush creeping up on his face. He didn’t plan on doing it like this but he feels like he needs Richie to know this. “I just like being around you...you’ve made the last few months so easy...”

Eddie glances up at Richie. Richie’s biting his lip and his face is scrunched in...as if he’s in pain. This is not the reaction Eddie expected.

“Why the hell are you looking at me like that?”, Eddie says.

“I think-” Richie clutches his stomach. “Oh man, I don’t think that hot dog was a good idea-”

“Yeah, man, I told you-”

Before Eddie can finish Richie smacks a hand to over his mouth and rushes toward Eddie.

“DON’T YOU DARE FUCKING THROW UP ON ME!”, Eddie screams.

Richie swerves around Eddie and throws up into a bush as he leans over a park gate.

Eddie throws his head back in annoyance and groans out loud. Of *fucking course* this had to happen. Richie’s done throwing up now; he’s literally bent in half over the park gate and he’s just moaning pathetically. Eddie shakes his head and walks over to Richie.

Eddie puts a hand on Richie’s back. “Got that all out of your system, dickwad?”

“Shut up.”, Richie grumbles lightly. “Ugh, fuck New York City, man.”

“Yeah, yeah. Come on, let’s go get you some Pepto.” Eddie pulls Richie up and off the gate. Eddie puts Richie’s arm around his shoulders and Eddie circles his own arm around Richie’s waist. Richie leans against him as they head off toward the store.

They’re back in the hotel room. After Richie threw up, they grabbed a bottle of Pepto-Bismol from the store and headed back to the hotel. Eddie forced Richie to drink the entire recommended dose of Pepto while Richie bitched and moaned about the taste. Eddie then made Richie brush his teeth and gurgle mouth wash.

Richie’s lying face up on his bed making weak groaning noises while Eddie flips through channels on the TV as he sits in his own bed. Eddie has practically given up on his idea of confessing his feelings to Richie today. Today has been a complete fucking disaster.

“I told you not to eat that hot dog, man. Those carts are swarming with bacteria.”

“Yeah, but what’s the point of living if you don’t take risks?” Richie looks at Eddie.

“God, you never learn.”, Eddie huffs.

Richie just hums in response. A few minutes pass and then the room is filled with light snoring. Eddie looks over and sees Richie has fallen asleep. Probably for the best, maybe he can sleep it off.

Eddie really did mean what he said before Richie puked his lunch. Richie doesn’t need to be a constant source of entertainment for him. He enjoys just being around Richie even if they’re doing mundane, everyday things. God, that sounds like such a fucking cliché, but it’s true. He wants to be with Richie and share everything with him – the good times, the bad times, the boring times, the amazing times. Everything.

Eddie even enjoyed taking care of Richie when he’s not feeling well. Sure, Richie’s a whiny asshole when he’s not feeling well, but Eddie was able to help him feel better. Eddie’s heart swells at the thought.

Eddie continues to flip channels until he lands on the cooking channel. Whatever. Eddie leans back into the pillows and watches whatever cooking competition is on TV. After a couple of episodes Eddie drifts off to sleep.

Eddie’s shoulder is being shaken. “Ugg, what?”

“Eds. Wake up, Eds.” Richie’s mouth is right up against Eddie’s ear. Richie shakes him again.

“Okay! Okay!” Eddie starts to sit up. Eddie opens his eyes to see Richie kneeling next to Eddie’s bed. “What is it? You better not throw up on my bed.”

“Nah, I’m actually feeling much better!” Richie actually does look

refreshed; his face has color in it and Eddie can feel the energy radiating off of him. “Thanks for helping me, man. I probably would have just passed out in that park without you.”

“Sure, sure.” Eddie’s glad the room is dark so Richie can’t see the blush creeping up his face.

“Hey, want to get something to eat? It’s actually getting kind of late. I didn’t want places to close before you woke up.”

“You can’t be serious? You literally threw up, like, a couple of hours ago, and now you’re hungry?”

“Yeah, numb nuts. I threw up so now my stomach is empty. You also made me lick practically every last drop of Pepto, which is designed to make me feel better, so, yeah, I’m fucking hungry.”, Richie says annoyingly.

“Okay, okay, but no fucking hot dogs.” Eddie wouldn’t put it past Richie.

“Yeah, never again, man.” Richie stands up and offers his hand to Eddie. Eddie blinks at it for a second before he places his hand in Richie’s. Richie pulls Eddie up off the bed.

“Hey, you mentioned an Italian place early. How about that?” Richie’s eyes are bright with excitement.

“Sure. That sounds good.” Eddie notices they’re still holding hands.

“Sweet.” Richie walks toward the door, dropping Eddie’s hand in the process.

“Yeah. Sweet.”, Eddie mumbles. Maybe the day isn’t going to be a complete waste after all?

The restaurant is a little bit fancier than Eddie initially thought and the food is a bit expensive, but Richie talks Eddie into it claiming they should be celebrating - Richie just got a great deal and Richie's back in the city. Eddie doesn't argue any further.

They're seated at a small booth in the back of the restaurant. The lights are dim, and there's a small burning candle and a single flower on the table. The restaurant just screams romantic date.

They get a bottle of wine to share and Richie gets lasagna while Eddie gets ravioli. Eddie debated getting spaghetti but then he thought better of it. He would never hear the end of it. Although Richie spends most of the night trying to find a way to rhyme Eddie with ravioli. They make light conversation throughout dinner. They even get a second of bottle of wine. By the end of dinner, Eddie's feeling a little tipsy.

As they're leaving the restaurant Richie grabs Eddie's arm. Richie has a wild look in his eyes, as if he has an idea that he just *needs* to share with Eddie.

"Hey! Wanna get some ice cream! Whatch 'chu say?" Richie's almost bursting at the seams. It reminds Eddie of when they were kids; Richie would get the same look in his eyes.

Eddie can feel a knot forming in his stomach. Maybe he really can do this. "Yeah! Let's do it!"

Eddie and Richie find an ice cream shop that's still open at such a late hour. Richie gets two scopes of Chunky Monkey and Eddie gets a scope of Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough. They walk around the city enjoying the sights with really no destination in mind. They're approaching the same park from the afternoon.

Eddie smirks at Richie. "You're not going to throw up again, are you?"

Richie bumps Eddie's shoulder. "Shut the fuck up, man. I wonder if my little present is still there?"

"Oh, that's fucking gross, Rich. We're eating!"

“Hey, you brought it up.” Richie grins as he continues to lick his ice cream cone.

“Wanna to walk through the park? I don’t really feel like going back to the room yet.” Eddie tries not to sound nervous.

“Hmm, good idea.”

They veer into the park. It’s pretty late so there’s not a lot of people around. The street lamps cast a light glow as they bounce off the small lake at the center of the park.

“Hey, do you mind if we sit for a little bit? I’m a little tired.” Eddie points to a bench on the edge of the lake. Richie nods in acknowledgement.

They sit on the bench; there’s only a couple of inches between them. Eddie’s heart is in his throat. Now that they’re here, Eddie is scared shitless; he doesn’t know if he’s brave enough to do this. It’s a huge risk. After all, he doesn’t know how Richie’s going to react. Eddie might have completely misread Richie, maybe he doesn’t still have feelings for him?

Eddie glances at Richie. Richie’s completely aglow from the light of the street lamps. Eddie doesn’t want to live the rest of his life with any ‘what ifs’. He’s never thought of himself as brave but he thinks he can do it for Richie. Richie’s always makes him feel brave.

Richie’s hand is resting on the bench between them. Eddie rests his hand on top of Richie’s.

“Hey, Rich...”

Richie glances down at their hands, and then up at Eddie. His eyes are wide. “Eds?”

“Rich, I-” The words get caught in Eddie’s throat as he stares into Richie’s eyes.

For once in his life Richie doesn’t seem to have any words either. Richie’s eyes flick down to Eddie’s lips. Their heads are coming closer and closer together. Eddie starts to tilt his head upward, his eyelids

drifting downward.

SPLAT

Eddie feels something cold and wet in his lap. His eyes burst open and looks down to see that a scoop of Richie's ice cream has fallen into his lap.

"SHIT! Shit! I'm sorry, Eds!" Richie's panicking, searching around in his pockets for a napkin or something. "Shit, shit!"

"Oh god fucking damnit! Fuck!" Eddie jumps up and throws the rest of his ice cream cone into trash bin next to the bench. "I give up! Never mind! Fuck it all!" God, the universe must hate him. Eddie storms out the park with Richie trailing behind him.

"Eds! Hey, come on, man! Eds! Would you just stop? I'm sorry!" Richie's trying to get Eddie to stop, but Eddie has had enough for one day.

Richie apparently gets the hint at some point because by the time they reach the hotel lobby Richie has become silent, just following Eddie patiently. Eddie barges into their hotel room and begins to take off his pants. He's pulling on his pajama pants as Richie enters the room.

"Eddie, listen, I'm sorry man."

"SHUT UP!" Eddie's in the middle of taking off his polo, which is a struggle since he's trying not to pull his stitches. "Just shut the fuck up!"

"Eds, it'll come out! It's not a big deal!"

"I thought I told you to shut up!" Eddie has managed to get his polo off, leaving him in his pajama pants and undershirt.

"Jesus Christ. They're just fucking pants, Eds!"

"I'm not upset over a fucking pair of pants!" Eddie throws his polo onto his bed in frustration.

“Then what in the hell are you so upset about!? You’ve been moody on and off all day! What the fuck is stuck up your ass!? If this is about the hot dog and me throwing up-”

“SHUT UP! SHUT UP!”, Eddie screams. Eddie doesn’t realize he’s moving until he collides with Richie. Eddie grabs Richie’s jacket collar and shoves Richie’s back against the wall. Eddie doesn’t want to hear another word come out of Richie’s fucking mouth. As a matter of fact, he doesn’t want Richie to even *move*, in fear he might do something stupid, again.

Richie is plastered against the wall. His eyes are the size of saucers, his mouth is hanging open in shock, and he’s panting. “Eddie”, he whispers.

“Shut up, Richard.” Eddie pushes Richie harder into the wall. “For once in your fucking life you’re going to shut. the. fuck. up.” Fuck, now they’re both panting.

“I’m just-” Richie is, apparently, still not listening.

“UUUGGGHHHH!” Eddie throws his head back. “I told you to shut up! God, you drive me fucking CRAZY!” Eddie lets go of Richie and starts to pace the room in frustration. “GOD! I don’t understand how I can be attracted to such a *fucking idiot!*”

“Wait - What?” It’s barely a whisper.

Eddie doesn’t hear Richie; he continues to wear a path into the hotel carpet. “You have no idea how frustrating this has been! You were gone for only a week - A WEEK - and in that amount of time I realized that it fucking sucks when you’re not around.”

“Eds?”

“It drove me absolutely bonkers – you not being here! You weren’t here in the mornings, yelling at me for making too much noise. You weren’t here to cheer me up after one of my shitty meetings. Fuck, I even missed your god-awful snoring at night!”

“Eddie-”

“I was so, so happy to have you back so I could finally tell you everything – everything that I’ve been too stupid or blind to realize before. But you have been slowly driving me fucking bonkers all fucking day! You somehow manage to drive me crazy when you’re *here* and when you’re *not here*. How is that fucking possible!? I don’t know if I should punch you or kiss you?”

“EDDIE!”

“WHAT!?” Eddie turns on Richie. Richie’s looking at him with such desire and heat in his eyes that it makes Eddie gasp. Eddie slowly realizes what he just said.

“Eddie-” Richie takes a nervous step closer to Eddie. “Do you...” Richie bites his lip. “Do you mean it?”, he whispers.

God fucking damnit. Eddie really messed up his whole romantic confession to Richie, didn’t he? Oh, well, fuck it.

“Yeah. God, of course, I mean it.” Eddie licks his lips. He tries to find the cougar to say what he really feels.

“You know, when I was in the hospital, I was so thankful you were there. You helped me through everything – my recovery, calling it off with Myra. You made the days better just by being there, and at first, I thought it was because we were – *are* best friends. You’ve always had the ability to make me feel like I can do anything.”

Eddie takes a big, deep breath. “It wasn’t until after you took me to the Kissing Bridge that I realized I have *feelings* for you. I thought it was just a crush, which is fucking embarrassing to say as a forty-year-old man, but when you went to Los Angeles, I felt like something was missing - like, a part of myself was missing. It wasn’t until you told me that you had to stay a little bit longer that it all clicked. I was so excited you got a deal, but at the same time it frightened me. It frightened me because I didn’t know if you were going to come back...if you were going to come back to *me*.” Eddie hiccups and notices his cheeks are wet from tears.

“Eds-” Richie’s crying too. He takes another step toward Eddie, although they’re still halfway across the room from each other.

Before Richie can say something, Eddie jumps in, “I’m sorry if this seems completely out of left field. I know you use to have a crush on me as a kid and I understand if you still don’t feel that way.”

“Fuck no, I don’t.”, Richie pants out.

“What?” Eddie’s heart drops. He had hoped Richie still had feelings for him. God, did Eddie just ruin everything?

“Fuck crushes, man. Crushes are for teenage boys who hog hammocks to annoy their best friend.”

“I don’t understand”

“I love you.”, Richie breathes out.

Eddie gasps, his breath literally sucked out of him.

“I love you so much, Eds. I’ve – god - I’ve always loved you. I think I even loved you when we were kids.” Richie takes his glasses off to wipe his eyes he’s crying so much. “I’ve been too much of a chickenshit to say anything, cause I didn’t think I would be lucky enough for you to feel the same way. I – I didn’t want to lose you.”

“C’mere.”, Eddie says breathlessly.

“What?” Richie raises one eyebrow in confusion.

“God, just shut up and come here!”, Eddie yells. God, why does Richie always have to make everything so goddamn difficult.

In a heartbeat, Richie’s pressing up against Eddie. Richie leans down to rest his forehead on top of Eddie’s. Eddie slowly runs both of his hands up Richie’s chest. Eddie tilts his head up to look up into Richie’s eyes as he cups the back of Richie’s neck. His fingers diving deep into Richie’s unruly curls. Eddie leans up.

“Eds-”, Richie whispers.

“I told you to shut up, Tozier.”, Eddie whispers.

Eddie pushes forward and their lips connect. Richie’s lips are soft and

warm. Eddie feels like his whole body is full of electricity. He's never felt anything like it before; it makes Eddie question whether or not he's actually kissed someone before (which he totally has). Richie grasps Eddie's waist and lightly presses their bodies together. Eddie moans. One of Eddie's hands moves to clutch the back of Richie's shirt, the other softly pulls at Richie's curls.

They pull away briefly for a breath of air. Their eyes lock for a brief second, and then they're kissing again. Their kisses are getting more intense as they press kiss after kiss to each other's lips, their heads moving side to side as they try to find the perfect angle.

Richie starts to slowly push up against Eddie, making Eddie walk backward, as they fight for dominance in the kiss. Eddie licks Richie's bottom lip; a low moan rips out of Richie. Eddie then feels Richie's tongue tracing his lips, asking for permission. Eddie parts his lips and from then on, it's just tongue and open mouth kisses. *God, holy fuck.* Eddie feels absolutely delirious at this point. He has no idea if they've been making out for a minute or an hour, and frankly, he doesn't give a fuck.

Eddie feels something hit the back of his knees. Richie's still pushing up against him. It takes a fair amount of effort for Eddie to focus his mind on something other than Richie's tongue, which is circling deliciously around Eddie's mouth. Eddie can feel his weight shifting; as he starts to lose his balance Eddie realizes he's hit the edge of the bed. If Richie doesn't stop pushing up against him, they're both going to go crashing down, ultimately leading to Richie crushing Eddie. Oh shit! Fuck! His stitches!

Eddie pulls his lips off of Richie's, causing a wet popping sound, as he starts to teeter backward. "Richie! Stop!"

Richie eyes snap open. "Wha-?"

Richie realizes what's about to happen as Eddie loses his footing and starts to fall, "Oh, fuck! Fuck, fuck, fuck!"

Richie wraps his arms around Eddie, yanks him up, and crushes Eddie to his chest. For a second it seems like they might both go down, their weight tittering side to side, but a second passes and they

remain standing, arms wrapped around each other with their chests heaving.

“Holy fuck, that was close.” Richie relaxes into the crook of Eddie’s neck.

Eddie laughs. “No shit.” Eddie buries his head into Richie’s neck and just breathes in the scent of him.

Richie pulls away slightly and looks down at Eddie. “You’re not IT, are you?”

“Excuse me - what!?”

“I mean, I feel like this is too good to be true! Like, I’ve been dreaming about this my whole life! Come on, you have to admit, this is totally something IT would pull.”

“Oh my god, you’re a fucking idiot.” Eddie rolls his eyes. Eddie pulls out of Richie arms, sits on the bed, and scoots up until he’s leaning against the pillows. Eddie pats the bed next to him. “C’mere, you big idiot.”

Richie scrambles up the bed until he’s lying next to Eddie.

“Can I kiss you again?” Richie’s staring at Eddie’s lips as if they’re magical.

“Fuck, yeah, you can.”, Eddie says as he grabs the back of Richie’s neck and crushes their lips together.

12. Chapter Twelve

Notes for the Chapter:

I hope everyone has enjoyed this story! I had so much fun writing it!

This chapter is a little unique as it alternates between Richie and Eddie's POV. Enjoy!

It Was Always You

Chapter Twelve

Richie's POV

Richie must be dreaming. There is no way in hell he's making out with Eddie Kaspbrak right now. They're completely splayed out on Richie's bed; lying on their sides facing each other. One of Richie's hands is cupping Eddie's face while his other hand is wrapped around Eddie's waist. Both of Eddie's arms are wrapped around Richie's neck.

Richie pulls back from the kiss causing Eddie to groan in disappointment. Richie grins and starts to pepper Eddie's face with kisses.

"God, Eds, please tell me I'm not dreaming. I didn't think this was even possible." Richie presses light kisses down Eddie's neck. Richie can feel Eddie's breath getting uneven.

"You're - you're not dreaming.", Eddie sighs into Richie's ear. "What do I have to do to make you believe that?"

"Mmhmm. Let me just keep kissing you. Maybe it will sink in after a couple of hours or so?"

"Deal." Eddie drags Richie's lips back to his. Richie moans into the kiss and starts running his hand up and down Eddie's back.

Eddie pulls back slightly, hissing in pain. Oh fuck. Eddie's stitches!

“Oh god, I’m sorry, Eddie! I’m sorry! I didn’t pull anything, did I?”
God, how did he manage to fuck this up so quickly?

The pain subsides from Eddie’s face. Eddie relaxes against Richie. “No, it’s ok, Rich. It just stung a little bit. Do you mind if we take a little break? My stitches are starting to get sore.” Eddie looks guilty for asking.

“Yeah, of course. I don’t want you to be uncomfortable or anything.”

Richie and Eddie sit up and rest against the pillows. Richie pulls an extra pillow out from behind his back and places it behind Eddie’s head. Eddie gives Richie a brilliant smile and grabs Richie’s hand. Eddie adjusts himself so he’s pressed up against Richie’s side and then rests his head on Richie’s shoulder. Richie wishes he could live in his moment forever.

“So, huh, Eds. I take it you figured your shit out?”

“Huh?” Eddie glances up at Richie.

“I mean - before I left - you said you didn’t know if you were gay or-”

Eddie laughs lightly. “Oh, yeah. Well, while you were gone, I took advantage of the peace and quiet to think about a few things. You know...what I want sexually, but also what I want out of life in general.”

“Oh yeah? How did you go about that? I mean, did you go to gay bars and flirt with tons of dudes or something?” Richie feels a nervous bubble starting to grow in his stomach. Fuck, men would be all over Eddie if he went to a gay bar.

Eddie huffs against Richie. “No, idiot. I actually signed up for an eHarmony account.”

Richie is stunned; he was not expecting that. “I’m sorry - you did what!?”

“God, don’t sound so surprised.” Eddie lifts his head off Richie’s shoulder, but he leaves their hands entwined. “I just wanted to explore what I found attractive without being a creeper. It actually

worked really well. I found I keep clicking on the same type of people.”

“Big, breasted blonds?”

Eddie flicks Richie nose. “No, dumbass. I actually have a thing for tall dark-haired men with glasses.”

“Oh.” Richie feels breathless.

Eddie grins at Richie. “So, uh, if you couldn’t tell, I’m gay. You know - cause I kissed you and all.”

Richie blinks at Eddie as he remembers when he came out to Eddie. He throws his head back in a big boisterous laugh. “Oh, Eds got jokes! You got off a good one!” Richie presses a quick kiss to Eddie’s temple.

“Yeah, yeah. You’re not the only funny one in this relationship, you know.” Eddie presses his own kiss to the underside of Richie’s jaw.

Richie goes still and then turns toward Eddie. “Is that - is that what you want?”

“What?” Eddie’s face scrunches in confusion.

“A relationship.”

Eddie faces relaxes. “Of course, I thought that was obvious. This isn’t just a fling or something. I want to – I want to be with you Richie. I mean - if that’s something you want-”

“Fuck, Eds. Of course, I want to!” Richie can feel tears building up again.

A smile spreads across Eddie’s face. Eddie gently takes ahold of Richie’s face and slowly brings their lips together. The kiss is tender but filled with so much emotion.

Eddie pulls back. “I hate to cut this short but it’s really late and I have a meeting tomorrow morning. Will you stay with me tonight?”

Richie breath hitches. “wha - what do you-?”

Eddie quickly jumps in. “I just mean, you can share the bed with me - if you want. It feels weird for us to sleep in separate beds after everything that’s happened tonight. I mean - we can’t do anything-,” Eddie’s eyes bounce around the room, trying to find the words. “We can’t do anything *physical*. I just want to be near you.” Eddie’s face is beat red, he’s so embarrassed.

Richie’s thinks his heart might burst out of his chest he’s so happy. “Fuck, yes. Fuck.”

Eddie laughs. “Alright, come on then. Go get changed.”

Richie changes into his pajamas, really just sweat pants and a ratty t-shirt, and then he’s sliding under the covers next to Eddie. It’s a little awkward; both of them are lying on their backs staring at the ceiling. Richie’s not sure if he should cuddle or spoon Eddie. He has no idea what’s on the table here. In the end, Eddie rolls over and leans over Richie.

“Goodnight, Rich.”, Eddie says as he pears into Richie’s eyes.

“Goodnight, Eds.”, Richie stares up at Eddie.

Eddie grins and then leans down to press a soft kiss to Richie’s lips. Richie cups Eddie’s face, completely melting into the kiss.

Eddie pulls back and settles back down into the bed. Richie continues to stare at the ceiling as he listens to Eddie’s soft breathing. A few minutes pass and then Richie feels Eddie’s hand faintly brush against his. Richie reaches out and entwines his fingers with Eddie’s. He hears Eddie sigh next to him. A smile pulls at Richie’s lips as he slowly falls to sleep.

Eddie’s POV

It's been a little over a week since Eddie and Richie have gotten together. It's been the best week of Eddie's life. He didn't know it was possible to be so happy. Not much has changed between Eddie and Richie – they still bicker and Richie still teases Eddie endlessly – but now they hold hands while they walk down the street, share a bed at night, and kiss on a regular basis. God, Eddie didn't know kissing could feel so good!

Eddie is in yet another meeting with Myra and her divorce lawyer. God, will it ever end? The time is passing so slowly, it's agonizing. Eddie stares at the clock to see how much longer he has until he can leave and meet up with Richie. He imagines Richie's sitting at his normal place at the coffee shop. Eddie can't wait to meet up with him.

“Mr. Kaspbrak? Excuse me, Mr. Kaspbrak?”

Eddie's head snaps up. “I'm sorry, what?”

“Mr. Kaspbrak.” Myra's lawyer is talking. “We were just talking about how to split up the more major assets. Now, as we discussed earlier, you and Mr. Scott proposed dividing the assets 50/50. Unfortunately, that's not going to work for my client.”

Eddie tunes out the rest of the conversation. God, this feels like such a fucking waste of time. He feels like Myra will never let this end. It makes Eddie feel stuck in the past, he can't move on until this is over. God, Eddie could literally be with Richie right now! They could finally figure out what they want to do next with their lives. They could move on from all this bullshit – the clown, Derry, their past lives – all of it.

Everything suddenly clicks in Eddie's mind.

“Myra!”, Eddie interrupts whatever stupid thing Myra's lawyer is blabbering about. “What was your first proposal? You wanted all of the assets and 75% of the financials, right?”

Eddie's lawyer, Myra's lawyer, and Myra are all stare at Eddie. Eddie has barely spoken a word during any of their meetings.

“Ugh, yes, that was our first proposal...but as you and Mr. Scott made clear-” Myra’s lawyer says, his eyes shifting from Myra to Eddie.

“Done.”, Eddie says with conviction.

“I’m sorry, what!?” , Myra’s lawyer says.

“Eddie, wait, we need to talk about this.” Eddie’s lawyer grabs onto his arm, trying to prevent Eddie from making a huge mistake.

“No, Toby.” Eddie whispers, turning to his lawyer. “I want this to be over, once and for all. I want to get on with my life.”

Eddie knows this isn’t the wisest decision. When they first started negotiating Myra demanded all of the assets (house, cars, etc.) along with 75% of their savings and investments. Eddie knows he’s taking a *huge risk* by giving all that up. He currently doesn’t have a job, and he has a buttload of medical bills to pay on top of all his living expenses.

Eddie quickly crunches the numbers in his head. He can make 15% of their financials work. 15% is not a lot, but he made good money at his job and he’s always been really good at saving money. He can do it, especially if he has Richie by his side.

“You got a deal.” Eddie turns toward Myra. “Myra, it’s over. I’m not going to change my mind. Take it and move on with your life.”

They’re all looking at Myra now. She has tears in her eyes. “Eddie-”

“No. No more, Myra.” Eddie stands up, silently threatening to leave.

Myra simply gaps at Eddie and then with a slight movement of her head, she nods.

“Goodbye, Myra.” Eddie turns on his heals and leaves the room.

Eddie's POV

Eddie just got off the Subway; he's fast walking toward the coffee shop to meet up with Richie. He can't believe he just did that! He feels so free! He can finally start to get on with his life! Eddie sees Richie's sitting outside the coffee shop. Eddie's still on the other side of the street waiting for the street light to turn.

"Richie!", Eddie yells. He sees Richie glance up. Eddie waves his hand at him. Even though Richie is on the other side of the street Eddie can see Richie frown in confusion - Eddie is supposed to meet up with Richie hours from now.

The street light turns and Eddie starts moving as fast as he can without straining his stitches. When he finally reaches Richie, he throws his arms around Richie's neck. Richie wraps his arms around Eddie's waist, catching him.

"Hey! Woah! Eds, what are you doing here? I thought you were in a meeting until this evening?" Richie pulls back to look down at Eddie.

"It's over." Eddie is having trouble forming words. He's trying to catch his breath.

"Wha-?"

"The divorce. It's over." Eddie's starting to get his breath back. "I gave Myra everything she asked for. It's done."

"You can't be serious?" Richie grips Eddie's waist tighter.

Eddie moves his hands to cup Richie's face. "As serious as a heart attack. I don't want to waste any more time. I want to move on. I want *us* to move on."

"Eds, you can't just give up-"

"Don't argue with me, Tozier. It's already done."

Richie is breathing heavily. "So we can - we can just go?"

"Yeah, Rich, we can go and do whatever the fuck we want." Eddie

starts to tilt his head up to kiss Richie.

“Come with me! To California!” Richie bursts out. The words pour out of him as if he’s been holding them back. “You can stay with me in my home in Malibu. I can help you while you recover. I’ll be able to be with you most of the time since I’m not going to be touring anytime soon. And you won’t have to worry about rent, bills, or anything. And, once you fully recover, I bet you can easily find a job in the city. Maybe you can even come with me for part of my tour, once I get back on the road again-”

Eddie can’t hold back anymore. Eddie surges forward, crushing their lips together. Richie hands dive into Eddie’s hair which pushes their lips closer together. They both moan at the pressure. They pull back slightly and then just stare into each other eyes. Eddie hooks his chin over Richie’s shoulder and hugs Richie closer.

“So, when do you want to leave?”, Eddie murmurs into Richie’s neck.

“Hmm, as soon as possible, but I think we should make a quick pit stop first.”, Richie says.

Eddie pulls back in confusion. “A pit stop?”

“Don’t worry, Eds. You’ll love it.” Richie kisses Eddie’s nose.

Richie’s POV

It’s the week of Thanksgiving. Richie and Eddie are on MA-28 South heading toward Cape Cod. Ben and Beverly have invited all of the Losers to Ben’s vacation home for Thanksgiving. It’ll be the first time they’ll all be together again since Eddie was in the hospital.

Eddie enjoys the scenery as Richie drives and hums along to the radio. One of Richie’s hand is tracing light circles on Eddie’s knee.

“I can’t believe Ben has a vacation home in Cape Cod.”, Richie says.
“He must be fucking loaded if he can afford something like that.”

“Says the guy who has a home in Malibu.”

“Hey, you’ll see. My home is nothing compared to Ben’s mansion. I mean, like, fuck, it’s beach front property and it has like 5 bedrooms!”

“It was really nice of them to invite all of us. I haven’t seen some of them in person since the fight.”

“Do you think they’ll be surprised?” Richie pulls his hand away from Eddie as he pulls off the highway.

“Surprised? About what?”

“You know.” Richie grins at Eddie, unable to contain his happiness.
“Surprised about us?”

Eddie gives Richie a brilliant smile. “I don’t know, Rich. They’re much smarter us. We’re just two big idiots.”

“Hmm.” Richie quickly grabs and squeezes Eddie’s knee. “But you’re my idiot.”

Before they know it, they’re pulling into the driveway. Richie was right. The place is a fucking mansion. It’s a beautiful two-story slate grey house with white trimming. The house sits on a slight hill which fades away into the edge of an estuary at the back.

“Holy fuck.” Richie double checks the address again. Yup, this is the place. Holy fuck.

“Holy fuck is right.”

The front door bursts open and they see Bev running toward them. They both get out of the car to greet her.

“Oh my god! Eddie! Richie!” Bev wraps her arms around Eddie’s neck who returns her hug. Richie can see tears in Bev’s eyes. “Oh my god! It’s so good to see both of you! Eddie, oh my god, you look great!”

Bev pulls away from Eddie and gives Richie a quick hug. “Come in, come in! Bill and Mike are already here!”

They enter the house where they’re greeted by Ben, Bill, and Mike. It’s like the reunion at the Jade of the Orient except there is only happiness and relief that they’re just together to be together. There’s no crazy clown they need to fight.

Richie opens bottles of beer and wine to hand around while the other Losers interrogate Eddie. They look at his stitches and ask him about his recovery and how the divorce is going.

Richie can tell Eddie’s getting overwhelmed from all the attention. Richie pushes his way through his friends who are completely surrounding Eddie. “Guys, guys! Gives Eds a break. You’re making him blush with all this attention!”

Eddie mouths a silent ‘thank you’ at Richie. Richie winks at him and then slings his arm around Eddie’s shoulder. “Look how red he is! God, Eds, you’re so cute when you blush.” Richie pinches Eddie’s cheek.

“God, Richie! Stop that!” Eddie swats at Richie. The others just laugh. Typical Richie and Eddie.

“Sorry, Eddie.”, Bill says. “We’re just so excited to see you.”

They all grab their drinks and head to the dining room. The table is overflowing with food. Through dinner each of the Losers fill the others in on what they’ve been doing since the fight with Pennywise.

Bill is working on another book and this time he has the perfect ending for it. Bill is a little embarrassed to admit it, but Audra and him are spending some time apart. They need to figure out if their marriage is something they can work on

After leaving Derry, Mike stayed with Bill in Los Angeles. While he was there, he planned a big cross-country trip which he’s going to start after Thanksgiving. He wants to see everything he’s missed while he was standing guard in Derry.

Ben and Bev have been staying at Ben’s vacation home since leaving

Derry. They take small trips on Ben's boat every now and then. Richie doesn't see a ring on Bev's hand but he wouldn't be surprised if Ben already had something planned.

Eddie's already updated everyone so it's Richie's turn. The Losers know Richie's been staying with Eddie in New York to help with him so Richie tells them he's got a new manager and he's now writing his own material.

"That's great, Rich!", Ben says.

"Yeah, now the rest of the world has to endure your horrible jokes.", Bev snorts.

Richie grabs his heart in mock shock. "You wound me, Bev."

They fall into more laughter and then Bill is talking about how his latest movie is going to be premiering at some film festival next month. Richie wants to mention his and Eddie's recent upgrade but he doesn't know how to say it. Richie feels a hand grasp his under the table, Eddie apparently feels the same way.

As it gets late, they move to the living room, continuing to drink and talk. It's nearly midnight when the excitement from the day starts to wear off. All of them are slouching on the couch, yawning.

"Oh, Rich. Eddie.", Bev says. "I forgot to show you to your rooms. Here, let me show you so you can put your luggage away."

Eddie makes a move to get up but Richie stops him. "Don't worry, Eds. I'll grab your luggage for you."

Eddie blushes lightly. "Thanks, Rich."

Richie follows Bev down the hallway. She turns on lights in two bedrooms which are directly across the hall from each other. "This is one is yours, and this one's Eddie's."

Richie glances in both rooms, but Eddie's room grabs his attention. "Oh my god! Is that a king bed? In a guest bedroom? Are you fucking serious?"

Bev rolls her eyes. “Oh my god, Richie, are you seriously going to steal Eddie’s bed. He’s injured.”

“God, Bev. I’m not that heartless.” Richie says as he drops both his and Eddie’s luggage on the king bed. Bev looks at him questioningly. Richie ignores her and walks back into the living room.

“Eds! Guess what!? We got a king bed! Gone are the days of us squeezing into a tiny bed!” Richie completely breaks whatever conversation is going on, all heads snap toward him. The other Losers mouths are open in shock, their eyes flickering between Richie and Eddie. Eddie’s face is bright red and he’s glaring at Richie.

“What? This is great news.”, Richie continues, grinning from ear to ear. He knows Eddie is going to fucking kill him for this. “We were sleeping on top of each other before. Although there’s no reason we can’t do that still, I know how much you like to cuddle-”

“RICHIE!” Eddie jumps up off the couch and tries to clamp his hand over Richie’s mouth. Richie just grabs his wrists and pulls Eddie into a hug.

“Oh my god, you guys. It’s about fucking time!”, Bill laughs hysterically.

“Yeah, no kidding. We could’ve cut the tension between you two with a knife. Congratulations!” Mike raises his glass in a toast.

“Oh my god, this is so embarrassing.” Eddie hides his face in Richie’s chest. “I hate you so much, Rich.”

Richie laughs and rests his head on top of Eddie’s. “I love you too, Eddie.”

Eddie glances up at Richie. Suddenly, Eddie grabs Richie’s face and pulls him down into a kiss. Richie melts into the kiss as the Losers whoop and holler at them. Richie never wants to let Eddie go and now he knows he’ll never have to.

Notes for the Chapter:

Thank you to everyone for giving kudos,

commenting, and bookmarking! You're the best.

I'm turning this into a series. I already have four sequels planned which will follow Eddie and Richie's relationship after this story. So please subscribe to the series or to me as an author to get updates!